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A CATECHISM

ON

CHURCH GOVERNMENT:

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THAT OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

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BY H. N. McTYEIRE, D.D.,
OF THE BISHOPS OF THE M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH.

NASHVILLE, TENN.:
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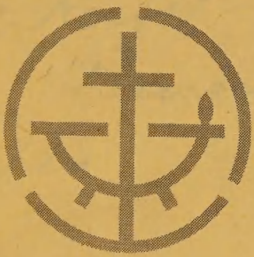

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A CATECHISM
ON
CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.
OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

SECTION I.
ITS CONSTITUENCY AND POWERS.

QUESTION. What is the meaning of *Conference* in Methodist government?

ANSWER. A formal meeting of ministers and members to do Church business.

Q. What are similar meetings in other Churches called?

A. Assemblies, Associations, Conventions, Councils, Presbyteries, Synods, etc.

Q. How many kinds of Conferences are there?

A. Five. The General Conference, the Annual Conference, the District Conference, the Quarterly Conference, and the Church Conference.

Q. Which is the highest judicatory?

A. The General Conference.

Q. How often does it meet?

A. Once every four years.

Q. What are the powers of this body?

A. It has full powers to make rules and regulations for the Church, under certain limitations and restrictions.

Q. Is the law-making power shared by any of the other Conferences?

A. Strictly speaking, no. They all act under rules and regulations made for them by the General Conference.

Q. Who compose the General Conference?

A. The Bishops of the whole Church, and the ministerial and lay delegates elected by the several Annual Conferences.

Q. How are the delegates elected?

A. The clerical members of each Annual Conference elect one representative of their number for every thirty-six members of the whole body. An equal number of lay representatives is then elected by the lay members.

Q. How many delegates were in the last General Conference?

A. There were one hundred and twenty-nine clerical and one hundred and twenty-nine lay delegates elect, and one hundred and forty-two clerical and one hundred and twenty-seven lay delegates were present.

Q. How long does a session of the General Conference last?

A. Usually about four weeks.

Q. When did laymen first appear in this body?

A. At the General Conference which met in Memphis, Tenn., May, 1870. Up to that time ministers only were members.

Q. When was lay delegation enacted?

A. The General Conference which met in New Orleans, April, 1866, recommended it, and the Annual Conferences, which at that time were composed of ministers only, concurred, and so it became a law.

Q. What precaution is used in selecting safe men for this highest judicatory of the Church?

A. The clerical members must have stood a satisfactory probation in the itinerant ministry, and the lay delegates must be twenty-five years of age, and members of the Church for at least six years previous to their election.

Q. Who presides in the General Conference?

A. One of the Bishops. They usually preside in turn, a day at a time. In case no Bishop be present, the General Conference will choose a President *pro tem.*

Q. Do the clerical and lay delegates deliberate separately?

A. They sit and act as one body; but, upon the call of one-fifth of the body, the lay and clerical delegates vote separately, and no measure can pass without the concurrence of both classes of representatives.

Section II.

Restrictive Rules—Delegation—Protecting the Constitution.

Q. The General Conference has authority to make laws under certain "limitations"—what are these limitations called?

A. The Restrictive Rules. They are few in number, and are meant to put certain vital interests of the Church beyond the reach of ordinary legislation.

Q. How may a change be made on any subject which is protected by these Restrictive Rules?

A. A majority of two-thirds of the General Conference, with the concurrence of three-fourths of the members of the several Annual Conferences, may effect it.

Q. What is the purpose of these constitutional limitations and restrictions?

A. To give stability to institutions. Where change is so difficult, it will hardly be made unless the wisdom and necessity of it are very plainly seen.

Q. Could our Articles of Religion and doctrinal standards be revoked or altered even by such a large vote as that?

A. They could not. It would require a more general consent to effect any, the least, change in them.

Q. Is any veto-power provided for in our organic law?

A. A limited one. If a rule or regulation is adopted by the General Conference which, in

the opinion of the Bishops, invades constitutional limitations, it must, before taking effect, be passed round among the Annual Conferences and receive the concurrence of three-fourths of their members, after having been adopted by two-thirds of the General Conference.

Q. When was the *delegated* General Conference adopted?

A. In 1808; and the first *delegated* General Conference met in 1812.

Q. Previous to that time what had been the form of the General Conference?

A. All the traveling preachers in America, who had stood out a certain probation, were members of that body, which then exercised unrestricted powers.

Q. When and where was the first session of that ecclesiastical body held?

A. It met in Baltimore, Dec., 1784, and is commonly known as the "Christmas Conference." By it the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was organized.

Q. What led to the delegated form of General Conference?

A. As the Church grew and spread abroad it became inconvenient and costly for all the ministers to meet quadrennially in one place.

Q. What other reason for a change grew out of this?

A. Those Annual Conferences near the seat of the General Conference had an undue weight in its deliberations.

Q. What other necessity was developed?

A. The members met *en masse*, and not by

virtue of election; they exercised conventional powers, and there was danger of sudden and violent changes in the fundamental polity of the Church. A delegated legislative body, under *restrictions*, was therefore determined on to insure stability of institutions and equality in representation.

Q. What was Bishop Asbury's opinion of the delegated General Conference?

A. He desired, with great desire, to see the doctrine and polity of Methodism secured under a Constitution before he died; and he rejoiced at the result.

Q. Who was the author of the report providing for the delegated General Conference and the Restrictive Rules?

A. Joshua Soule, who was ordained Bishop in 1824, and died in 1867.

Q. Does the General Conference, meeting once in four years, find it expedient at every session to make rules and regulations?

A. Yes. Education, and Missions, and Christian literature, are to be promoted; new agencies must be started to suit the changing aspects of society and a growing country, and old ones are to be revised; the lower judicatories need to be reviewed, and Connectional officers must be elected. And so there is always some work to be done.

Q. What is needed?

A. The Church wants her wisest and best men in this great council; and prayer for their guidance should be made to our Lord, Christ, who is the Head of the Church.

Q. In what form does the General Conference publish its laws?

A. In a book called "The Discipline." A new edition is issued from the Publishing House every four years.

Q. Ought all Methodists to have this book?

A. Yes. No Methodist should be ignorant of our doctrines or rules. Next to the Bible every one ought to procure the articles and canons of the Church to which he belongs.

Q. When and where was the last General Conference held?

A. May, 1882, in Nashville, Tenn.

Q. When and where will the next General Conference meet?

A. May, 1886, in Richmond, Va.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

SECTION I.

NUMBER—TERRITORY—MEMBERS.

QUESTION. What is the number of Annual Conferences?

ANSWER. Thirty-eight.

Q. Name them.

A. Baltimore, Virginia, Western Virginia, Holston, North Carolina, South Carolina, North Georgia, South Georgia, Florida, Alabama, North Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Mississippi, Memphis, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisville, St. Louis, South-west Missouri, Missouri, Western, Denver, Indian Mission, Arkansas, White River, Little Rock, North Texas, East Texas, Texas, North-west Texas, West Texas, German Mission, Los Angeles, Pacific, Columbia, Illinois, Montana.

Q. How are they bounded?

A. By natural, not by State, lines, for the convenience of the work. Large States may be divided into two or more Annual Conferences. The State of Texas has five Conferences within its limits, while the Holston Conference takes in parts of five States.

Q. Who compose an Annual Conference?

A. The traveling preachers within its limits who have stood a certain probation, and lay delegates.

Q. Are Annual Conferences equal in the number of ministers and private members?

A. They are unequal. For instance, North Carolina Conference has seventy-two thousand two hundred and fifty-six members, and two hundred and twelve ministers. Columbia Conference (in Oregon) has one thousand four hundred and forty-six members, and twenty-one ministers.

Q. Whence are their names derived?

A. From a principal city, as Baltimore Conference, Memphis Conference; or from a river, as Columbia, Holston; or more commonly, from the State or portion of the State in which they are situated.

Q. How often does an Annual Conference meet?

A. As the name implies—once a year. Therefore, it is sometimes called the Yearly Conference.

Q. How is the territory of an Annual Conference subdivided?

A. Into Districts, of which there are, on an average, about six or seven to each Conference. And these Districts are again subdivided into charges, not more than twenty to each District.

Q. What is the principal business of an Annual Conference when in session?

A. To receive from pastors their reports of the year's work; to admit candidates for the pastoral work on trial, or into full connection; to inquire into the life and administration of

the ministerial members, and to try, acquit, suspend, or expel any who may be accused of immorality or false teaching; to examine into the qualification of candidates for deacon's and elder's orders, and elect to the same; to promote the work of Sunday-schools, religious publications, missions, and education within its bounds, and to gather and distribute funds for the relief of worn-out ministers, and the widows or orphans of such as have died in the work. Then, also, the preachers receive appointments for another year.

Q. How long does the session of an Annual Conference last?

A. Usually about a week.

Q. Who presides?

A. One of the Bishops. In case no Bishop is present, the Conference elects a president from among the traveling elders.

Q. By whom is the place for meeting chosen?

A. By the Conference.

Q. Who appoints the time of meeting?

A. The Bishop who presides.

Q. Are preachers on trial members of the Annual Conference?

A. They are not. All the preachers on trial, and those to be admitted on trial, are required to attend the session; but they do not vote on any question, nor speak unless by consent of the Conference.

Q. What is the time of probation?

A. Not less than two years; but it may be extended to a longer time.

Q. What is the object of probation?

A. To try a preacher, and prove, by experiment of his labors, whether he is suitable for the pastoral charge.

Q. What is the result?

A. When approved, they are admitted into full connection. Sometimes they show themselves unequal to the labors and duties of the itinerant ministry; if there is hope of improvement, they are continued on trial; if not, they are discontinued.

Section II.

Lay Element—Analogies of Civil Governments.

Q. How are the lay members of the Annual Conference appointed?

A. Each District Conference chooses four, every year.

Q. Under what qualifications?

A. Every representative so chosen must be from the District, and twenty-five years of age, and for six years next preceding his election a member of the Church.

Q. Are the lay members of an Annual Conference equal in number to the clerical members?

A. They are not: the business done here, though laymen give valuable aid in some parts of it, is mainly ministerial and executive.

Q. What are the relative numbers of ministers and laymen in the other Conferences?

A. In the General Conference the lay and ministerial members are equal; in the District, Quarterly, and Church Conferences, the lay members outnumber the ministers.

Q. Who determines the number and boundaries of the Annual Conferences?

A. The General Conference.

Q. Is there much analogy here between our civil and our Church Governments?

A. Hardly. The Federal Government was made and limited by the sovereign States: the latter existed before the former. Not so in the Church: the General Conference existed first, and made the Annual Conferences, and gave them such powers as they have.

Q. What may be said of this essential difference between our Church and our State constitutions?

A. The State may be the better and the Church none the worse for it. Their constituents and spirit and objects are different, and so are the materials they work on, and the means they work with.

Q. What may be said in reply to those who object that Methodist Church Government is not, in this and some other particulars, like the Government of the United States?

A. The Apostolic and Primitive Church was open to the same objection. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." A form of government that is good for the Church may not suit the State; or what is best for the State may not suit the Church.

Q. If patriotism required Christians to conform their Church Government to the country they lived in, what would follow?

A. Those Christians under an American President, and a British Queen, and a French

Emperor, and a Turkish Sultan, would be copying after various and very different models of "this world."

Q. What does history show?

A. That the true Church of God has lived under all forms of human government, and outlived them, and has sought its model in none.

Q. Have any Christians boasted of the analogy between their form of Church Government and that of the United States?

A. Yes. Some have so far forgotten the "pattern shown in the mount" as to do this. They were fond of tracing the republican features of their system and pointing out the close agreement between their Church Government and our civil government. Such glorying is not good. Of late years we do not hear so much of it in certain quarters.

Q. What lessons may we learn from this?

A. Many—not the least, this: That political economy and Church polity do not agree at every point; and that the custom of civil courts is not always a safe guide in Church courts.

Section III.

Records—The General Minutes.

Q. What provision is made for the supervision of Annual Conferences by the higher judicatory?

A. Among others, this: Every Annual Conference must keep a record of its proceedings;

said record must be signed by the president and the secretary, and a copy of the same be sent up to the General Conference.

Q. What disposition is made of these journals?

A. A committee of the General Conference examines them, and reports any irregularity that may appear; and thus uniformity of administration and proceeding is promoted.

Q. What are the General Minutes?

A. An annual and official publication by the Church of certain statistics and facts extracted from the records of all the Annual Conferences.

Q. How are these items procured?

A. The secretary of each Annual Conference forwards to the Editor of Books at the Publishing House full and correct items for insertion in the General Minutes, according to the form therein adopted.

Q. What is the principal value of these General Minutes?

A. They contain the history of all the Annual Conferences for one year. With bound volumes of these Minutes any preacher may be traced through every appointment from his entrance to the close of his ministerial life. If he withdraws, or is expelled, or locates, the fact is noted. When he dies a memoir closes the history, with a recapitulation of his labors.

Q. What other information do the General Minutes furnish?

A. They furnish an official history of the work as well as of the workmen. In them we see the formation of circuits and stations—the

sums contributed for missions and other causes, from year to year—the increase of members—the growth of Sunday-schools, and the number of infant and of adult baptisms, and other items of information.

Q. What is the name of the Annual Conference in which you live?

A. [To be supplied by teacher.]

Q. Where and when was its last session held?

A. [To be supplied.]

Q. Who presided?

A. [To be supplied.]

Q. At what place will your Annual Conference hold its next session?

A. [To be supplied.]

CHAPTER III.

OF THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE.

SECTION I.

CIRCUIT—STATION—MISSION.

QUESTION. What is a District?

ANSWER. It is a portion of the territory of an Annual Conference, including a dozen or more charges, as circuits, stations, or missions.

Q. What is a circuit?

A. It is the collective name of several churches under the charge of one minister, who takes the spiritual oversight of them. He is the preacher in charge. He goes *round* among them, and is sometimes called the circuit-preacher.

Q. Give an early instance of traveling a circuit.

A. It is written of Samuel the prophet, "And he went from year to year, in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places, and his return was to Ramah."

Q. What is the extent of a circuit?

A. Circuits differ in size. In newly-settled and thinly-inhabited regions a circuit may be one or two hundred miles around, and contain twenty or more appointments, or preaching-places.

Q. How long is the preacher in charge of such a circuit making a round?

A. Usually a month, preaching on week-days as well as Sundays. There are two-weeks circuits, three-weeks circuits, four-weeks circuits.

Q. What is the cause of these large circuits?

A. There are two causes: The first is, the laborers are few, and in this way one may proclaim the gospel to many people who otherwise would not hear it.

Q. What is the other reason for putting so large a field in charge of one pastor?

A. The Lord has ordained that those who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel; but the churches are often so poor that several of them must be joined together in order to support a pastor.

Q. When is a circuit called a mission?

A. When it is not self-supporting, and has to draw aid, in whole or in part, from the Missionary Board to maintain its pastor.

Q. Wherein does a station differ from a circuit?

A. When a preacher has the pastoral charge of one church only, or of two churches near together, to which he ministers weekly, that is called a station.

Q. What is the name of the District in which you live?

A. [To be supplied by the teacher.]

Q. What Church-officer has the oversight of a District?

A. The Presiding Elder.

Q. Who is your Presiding Elder?

A. [To be supplied by the teacher.]

Q. What is the name of the circuit [or station] in which you live?

A. [To be supplied.]

Q. Who is the pastor, or preacher in charge?

A. [To be supplied.]

Section II.

Work to be Done.

Q. You have now spoken of General, of Annual, and of District Conferences—tell how they are composed and related.

A. The District Conference is made up of circuits and stations—a dozen, more or less; the Annual Conference is made up of Districts—a half dozen, more or less; the General Conference is made up (by delegation) from the Annual Conferences, of which there are now thirty-eight.

Q. Which Conference is next after the Annual Conference?

A. The District Conference.

Q. How often does it meet?

A. Once a year, at such time as the Presiding Elder appoints.

Q. Who are members of the District Conference?

A. All the preachers in the District, both traveling and local, and certain laymen, the number of whom and the mode of their appointment each Annual Conference is allowed to determine for itself.

Q Why did the law leave this last point to be determined by the Annual Conferences?

A. For the convenience of the people. In the new and thinly-settled States, it is more difficult to get a full attendance of lay members than in the older settlements. A plan that suits the one may not suit the other.

Q. Can you give some of the plans for supplying the lay element of District Conferences?

A. Some of the Annual Conferences direct that every layman who bears an office shall be a member of the District Conference: this takes in all the stewards, trustees, Sunday-school superintendents, exhorters, and class-leaders.

Q. What plan has been adopted by other Annual Conferences?

A. They have determined that each circuit and station shall elect four delegates to the District Conference. Others, more or less.

Q. How long does a District Conference continue in session?

A. Usually two or three days: a longer time is often profitably spent in these meetings.

Q. Who presides?

A. A Bishop, or, in his absence, the Presiding Elder; and if both be absent, the Conference elects a president.

Q. What subjects are considered?

A. The spiritual condition of the several charges of the District is inquired into—the pastors and delegates giving information.

Q. Will you state some of the items that are taken into the account by a District Conference?

A. The whole territory is scanned, to see if

there is any unoccupied ground, where a mission ought to be established, or that can be embraced by extending the lines of circuits. This inquiry often brings to light an outlying and neglected moral waste, where none was supposed to exist.

Q. What other interest of Domestic Missions is served?

A. Information is gained as to the ability to be self-supporting on the part of those who are drawing aid from the Missionary Treasury.

Q. What advantage does the Sunday-school cause derive?

A. Much, every way. The District Conference is the best form of Sunday-school convention. One of the duties prescribed is to inquire "as to Sunday-schools and the manner of conducting them." Here are assembled the "workers," or those who ought to be—men who know the real difficulties to be overcome. They are in no danger of becoming mere theorists; and having other Church interests in hand, they are not likely, in pushing this one, to run into extremes. The Sunday-school cause will never prosper, especially in the country, unless the class of Christian men who mainly constitute a District Conference take hold of it in the right way.

Q. How are the financial and temporal affairs of the Church affected by the District Conference?

A. They are all helped. One good example here brought out provokes others to go and do likewise. The officers of a circuit who have

been measuring themselves by themselves learn in this exposition and comparison of financial systems how defective their own is, and they are improved.

Q. What of the social power of the District Conference?

A. Laborers in the Lord's vineyard, who have toiled apart and remained strangers on adjoining circuits, are here brought together, and join hands and are strengthened. The social element of our religion ought to be cultivated. We believe in the communion of saints.

Q. What of the moral and religious influence of the District Conference?

A. It is good to the use of edifying. The Discipline prescribes that "at these Conferences prominence shall be given to religious exercises, such as preaching, prayer-meetings, love-feasts, and the administration of the sacraments." Revivals and protracted-meetings frequently grow out of them. Equally removed from the Quarterly and the Annual Conference —larger and more inspiring than the former, and less absorbed in schedule business than the latter—the District Conference affords the best conditions for effective preaching and for Christian fellowship.

Q. What body does the District Conference resemble?

A. It is much like the first Conferences of Mr. Wesley, in which free and large "conversations" were held on various Church interests.

Q. Besides leading to concert of action on the best methods, and to an increase of zeal

and unity among ministers and laymen, what other end has been served by the District Conference?

A. This institute has done much to promote the successful working of lay delegation in the Annual and the General Conference.

Section III.

History—General Uses.

Q. When was the District Conference instituted?

A. By the General Conference of 1870 it was formally authorized, and the present section of the Discipline on that subject was enacted at that time.

Q. Was that its beginning?

A. The subject was much discussed in the General Conference of 1866, and informal District Conferences began to be held that year. Their capacity for usefulness was proved by trial before they were defined and required to be held by law.

Q. Was there not a District Conference over fifty years ago?

A. Yes—a meeting by that name, but very different from the present one. In 1820 the Discipline provided for all the local preachers who had been licensed two years, within each Presiding Elder's jurisdiction, to meet annually and transact certain business pertaining to themselves. This law was not continued after 1836.

Q. What was the cause of failure in that District Conference?

A. Its basis was too narrow, and its constituency too few and all of one sort; and it was found that the business allotted to it could be done better by another body.

Q. What other important business does the Discipline prescribe?

A. The District Conference shall elect annually, by ballot, from the District, four delegates to the ensuing Annual Conference: *provided* no member of the Annual Conference shall vote in said election.

Q. Why may not traveling preachers, who are members of the Annual Conference, vote in this election?

A. Because they already belong to the clerical part of that body, and have their representation in it, as such.

Q. Who elect, every four years, one-half of the members of the General Conference?

A. The lay delegates who have been sent up by the District Conferences to the Annual Conferences.

Q. Are not the rights and privileges of the laity fully provided for in this system of government?

A. It would seem so, practically and substantially, notwithstanding the speculative objections of theorists to the contrary.

Q. What other benefit of the District Conference?

A. The District, thus organized and brought together in the persons of its leading members,

realizes its unity and strength, and undertakes Church enterprises accordingly.

Q. Mention some of these Church enterprises.

A. The District parsonage is one. District high schools have been set up in various parts of the Connection, to the great benefit of Christian education; and District camp-meetings have been successful. Thus what cannot be done by a single circuit may be done by a combination.

Q. What other purpose is served by the District Conference?

A. It greatly aids in the episcopal supervision of the temporal and spiritual interests of the Church.

Q. Can the Bishops attend every District Conference?

A. Not in one year. But this Conference affords a point for labor and observation better than any other; and by availing themselves of the District meetings, the Bishops are, in time, brought in contact with all portions of the work.

Q. By whom is the place of meeting selected?

A. By the District Conference?

Q. Where was your last District Conference held?

A. [To be supplied by the teacher.]

Q. Where will its next session be held?

A. [To be supplied by the teacher.]

Q. What laymen were elected delegates to the Annual Conference by your last District Conference?

A. [To be supplied by the teacher.]

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE QUARTERLY CONFERENCE.

SECTION I.

ITS COMPOSITION—BUSINESS.

QUESTION. What is a Quarterly Conference?

ANSWER. It is the stated meeting of the official members of a circuit, station, or mission, to attend to Church business.

Q. How often does it meet?

A. As its name implies—four times a year.

Q. Who compose a Quarterly Conference?

A. All the traveling and local preachers of the circuit, with the exhorters, stewards, trustees, and class-leaders; also the superintendents of Sunday-schools who are members of the Church, and the secretaries of the Church Conferences.

Q. What is the business of this body?

A. It takes account of the temporal and spiritual welfare of the Church, elects superintendents of Sunday-schools, trustees, and stewards, and licenses proper persons to preach or exhort.

Q. Has it any judicial duties?

A. It acquits, suspends, or expels, accused local preachers, and is a court of appeal for laymen who may have been censured by lower courts.

Q. What other duties has it?

A. No preacher can be admitted into the Annual Conference on trial without first procuring a recommendation from the Quarterly Conference; and candidates for deacon's or elder's orders, in the local ministry, must first be approved by their Quarterly Conferences.

Q. What is the difference between a Quarterly *Conference* and a quarterly-*meeting?*

A. These terms are employed interchangeably: strictly speaking, the last refers to the general religious service which usually includes Saturday and Sunday, and is a season of more than ordinary interest, wherein, besides preaching, the sacraments are administered and love-feast is held; while the first refers to the official body transacting business.

Q. Is any particular number or proportion of its members necessary to make the proceedings of a Quarterly Conference valid?

A. The members present at any regularly called session constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Q. Is this so in reference to the other four Conferences?

A. This rule applies to all except the General Conference, wherein a majority of the delegates elect is necessary for a quorum.

Q. Why is this difference?

A. The General Conference, meeting once in four years, is the only law-making and strictly *delegated* body. The other Conferences meet oftener, and their duties are judicial and executive rather than legislative.

Q. Why is the time of meeting left to the Presiding Elder?

A. Because his duty is to hold all the Quarterly Conferences in his District, and he must therefore have the power to regulate their assembling in order to get round four times a year.

Q. Suppose, in the absence of the Presiding Elder, some one else should appoint the time for the Conference?

A. The Presiding Elder must appoint the time of holding a Quarterly Conference. If another person appoints it without his knowledge, it is not a legal session, even if the preacher in charge presides in it.

Section II.

Its Journals—Relative Position.

Q. Are the proceedings recorded?

A. The minutes of a Quarterly Conference must be kept by a secretary, and be read and approved at the close of the session when they are taken: they cannot be approved at any subsequent session. The unrecorded action of the Conference is of no legal authority.

Q. Of what value are these records?

A. Much every way. They preserve important facts in the history of the Church, and authenticate acts that concern Christian character, ministerial standing, and Church property.

Q. What provision is made for preserving the journals in permanent and convenient form?

A. Of the stewards one is elected who is called the Recording Steward. To him the secretary of the Quarterly Conference turns over the minutes when approved, and he records them in a book of which he is the custodian.

Q. What relation to the ministry does the Quarterly Conference bear?

A. A very important one. All ministers of every office and grade must first be licensed by the Quarterly Conference: there they begin. That body, composed by a large majority of laymen, must recommend all who afterward become pastors; and no local preacher can attain unto deacon's or elder's orders without its consent.

Q. How is the vote taken on licensing ministers or recommending them for orders?

A. By ballot—that every one may vote conscientiously, and act without personal or social constraint in so grave a matter.

Q. What, then, is the relative importance of the Quarterly Conference in our ecclesiastical economy?

A. It stands very high. Its executive and judicial work is closely related to the Church's order and prosperity. Its functions are organic, and in the present system cannot be dispensed with.

Q. The records of every Annual Conference are sent up to the General Conference for examination and revision—is any provision of this sort made for the records of the Quarterly Conference?

A. They are sent to the District Conference annually for examination.

Q. What may be said, in general, of the Quarterly Conference?

A. It ought to be magnified in the public estimation; those who are members of it should attend its sessions, and discharge their official duties conscientiously; and the religious services connected with it ought to be occasions of special interest and edification.

Q. What does the Discipline prescribe as one of the duties of every preacher having charge of a circuit, station, or mission?

A. To see that a fast be held in every congregation within his charge on the Friday preceding every quarterly-meeting, and that suitable services be held on the occasion wherever practicable.

Q. When was your last quarterly-meeting held?

A. [To be supplied by the teacher.]

Q. Was it the first, or second, or third, or fourth quarterly-meeting for this year?

A. [To be supplied.]

Q. Where was it held?

A. [On circuits or missions, to be supplied.]

Q. When and where is the next session to be held?

A. [To be supplied.]

CHAPTER V.

OF THE CHURCH CONFERENCE.

SECTION I.

ITS OBJECT—ORDER OF BUSINESS.

QUESTION. What is a Church Conference?

ANSWER. A meeting of the members and ministers residing and worshiping at a given place, for the consideration and transaction of local Church business.

Q. Who presides over this Conference?

A. The preacher in charge.

Q. How often does it meet?

A. On stations, once a month; on circuits, it may meet once in three months at each appointment or preaching-place where there is an organized society.

Q. What is the object of the Church Conference?

A. To give to all the members information of what is being done in Church-work, and of what is needed to be done; to promote their coöperation in enterprises of benevolence and mercy, and to enlist them in measures for extending the kingdom of God at home and abroad.

Q. At what time does it convene?

A. On week-day or Sunday—at any time

most convenient for assembling the greatest number of members; but if on Sunday, care must be taken not to interfere with the hour of public worship.

Q. Is any record kept of its proceedings?

A. A secretary is elected annually, at the first meeting after the session of the Annual Conference. His duty is to make a record of the proceedings, and keep them in a book.

Q. Is the roll of members called?

A. It may be, though this is not expedient at every meeting.

Q. What is the advantage of calling the roll?

A. It facilitates the keeping of a correct registry, and assists the pastor in becoming acquainted with the members, especially in regions of the country thinly settled, and where society is not well organized.

Q. What may be done with the names of any who by change of residence or otherwise have been lost sight of for a year?

A. They may be struck off of the list of members: nevertheless, if such a person should reäppear and claim his membership, his name may be restored by a vote of the Church Conference.

Q. What is the purpose of this rule?

A. That the Church-register may represent only real and living members. It should not be swollen with names of which no one can give any account.

Q. What is the proper course for those who are removing to a distance?

A. To obtain a certificate, or letter, from the

pastor, showing that they have been acceptable members, and thus transfer their membership regularly with their residence.

Q. Do all pursue this course?

A. Not all: some remove unexpectedly, while others are careless of their Church privileges, and do not prize them as they should, and so they are lost sight of, and the roll must be purged of their names.

Q. Should inquiry be made into the moral conduct or character of members at this meeting?

A. By no means. This is not the place for entertaining charges, or to make accusations, or lodge complaints against any. Other tribunals have been provided for that purpose. To attempt the examination of character in the Church Conference would be likely to pervert the Conference and injure the Church.

Q. How could this be?

A. Indiscreet persons might take advantage of such an opportunity to assail or cast suspicion upon others, and the envious and captious would wound and grieve those they could not convict. Persons of nice sensibility, rather than expose themselves to such rash and irresponsible attacks, would seek Church-membership elsewhere. Strife and schism, and every evil work, would follow such an abuse of the Church Conference.

Section II.

Social and Moral Benefits.

Q. What is the business of the Church Conference?

A. The pastor and the officers of the Church give information of their work; and some of these reports suggest corresponding and coöperative action on the part of members.

Q. How do the stewards find the Church Conference useful?

A. In giving correct information concerning the collections, and obtaining the subscription of members, or their consent to the assessments made on them, for the support of the gospel.

Q. What interest have the poor in this Conference?

A. Here inquiries may be made as to what is being done for the relief of the poor, and what is needed to be done. Committees of help may be raised for special cases. In times of epidemic, or of public distress, the Church ought to have many feet and many hands to search out misery and relieve it—especially among those of her own household.

Q. How can the Church Conference be made helpful to Sunday-schools?

A. By enlisting teachers and other workers. Often, in the country appointments, the circuit preacher organizes a Sunday-school and sets it agoing, and it dies out before he returns. The people regard it as *his* Sunday-school, not *theirs*. If the matter were fully considered in a Church Conference, the result might be different.

Q. What other questions are raised in a Church Conference?

A. Is the Church here doing its duty for the cause of missions? Is our religious literature circulated and read? Can the Church extend its work by establishing additional prayer-meetings and Sunday-schools?

Q. What might be proper answers?

A. To detail certain persons to go forward in the work.

Q. What is one main end of the Church Conference?

A. To put all the members to work for Christ.

Q. In order to this what is necessary?

A. That all should realize that they belong to the body of Christ, and are members in particular.

Q. What does Paul say of the Church as likened to a body?

A. "For the body is not one member, but many." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Q. What warning does the apostle give?

A. That those members which occupy the humbler places should not consider themselves useless.

Q. How does he represent this?

A. The foot must not say, Because I am not the hand, therefore I am no part of the body. And the ear must not say, Because I am not the eye, therefore I am not of the body.

Q. What sort of a "body" would that be that is all eye or all hand?

A. It would be no body at all—it would be monstrous.

Q. Can a true Church of Christ consist of preachers alone, or of stewards alone?

A. No; a true Church consists of persons with various gifts, but of one Spirit; of many members, with the life of Christ in every part.

Q. Can all do something for the glory of God?

A. Yes; all can do something, and the Church Conference, under the pastor's direction, is to find something for them to do, and put them to doing it.

Q. But may not certain persons be excused because they are weak?

A. Paul says, "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary."

Q. What is the plan of those pastors who hold the most successful Church Conferences?

A. They give them due importance by notifying the Church beforehand of the time when, and the place where, they are to be held.

Q. What else is done?

A. They select a subject, and have it well prepared for the consideration of the Conference.

Q. Is there a right to select topics?

A. The Discipline says: "If the observance of the full order of business is likely to protract the session beyond a reasonable limit, the president may, from time to time, select the most important matters and bring them forward."

Q. What else is necessary to success?

A. To keep to the business in hand until it

is disposed of: promiscuous talking easily runs into vain jangling.

Q. When was the Church Conference formally instituted?

A. Its formal institution dates as late as the General Conference of 1866; but through the Leaders' Meeting, and in other ways, pastors had before sought with less advantage to reach the ends it proposes.

Recapitulation.

We have now gone over the five Conferences of Methodism.

The General Conference is the highest. It meets every fourth year. In this, the only law-making body, all parts of the Church are represented, and the number of ministerial and lay delegates is equal.

The Annual Conferences are thirty-eight. Once a year they meet, and their most interesting feature to the public is that then and there pastors give in reports, and new appointments are made for the following year.

The District Conference meets once a year also. Here that important ecclesiastical officer, the Presiding Elder, gathers all his forces and has a review of the work done and in progress. There is conversation as to the best plans of Christian labor, and a suggestive comparison of methods and results. Here also the official laymen and the preachers have their freest and most productive contact.

Next the Quarterly Conference, four times a year, full of work, with a *quarterly-meeting* out-

side, rich in its results. Here is the *genesis* of all official life. Its schedule contains twenty-three questions, many of them intensely *business.*

Last in the series comes the Church Conference, assembling whenever there is a cause and a call for it. Here the pastor comes down from the pulpit, and touches *the people.* He lays his hand on them, and they lay their hands to the work that is all around, level to every one's capacity. Here the individual member realizes his identity with the body of Christ and his relations to the brethren. Upon *this point*, finally, the forces previously gathered must be delivered, or they are spent in vain. THE PEOPLE must be reached. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so freely and variously distributed among them, must be drawn out and stirred up in order to a full development of the New Testament Church. Life is more than law. If the work contemplated in the last of this series of Conferences be not accomplished by that or some other agency, then the great law-making Conference that heads the list will meet in vain, and the others will be held to little purpose.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE MINISTRY.

Section I.

Tests of Those who Profess to be Called to Preach.

Question. What is the teaching of Methodism concerning a call to the ministry?

Answer. That it is not of man, but of God. Every one truly called to preach the gospel is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.

Q. State in the words of the Catechism the offices performed by the Holy Ghost in connection with the Christian ministry.

A. He calls and qualifies men from time to time to preach the word and minister the sacraments, and renders their preaching effectual to the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers.

Q. How do we try those who profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

A. In three particulars: First—the Church asks if they know God as a pardoning God. Those who offer to teach others the way of salvation must themselves have an experimental and a personal knowledge of it. The blind cannot lead the blind.

Q. How does Paul put the order of conversion and preaching?

A. Conversion is first—"God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

Q. Being satisfied with the *religious experience* and *character* of one who professes to be called to preach, what is the second particular of inquiry?

A. Is he able and apt to teach? Has he gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Has he (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding, a right judgment in the things of God? Does he speak justly, readily, clearly?

Q. What next?

A. Has he fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin and converted to God by his preaching? Are believers edified? As long as these three marks—gifts, grace, and usefulness—concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved by the Holy Ghost.

Q. What are those called who are being tried for the ministry?

A. They are called *licentiates*, or *probationers*—licensed, but not yet ordained. The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously had before any are fully admitted into the ministry, that this sacred office be not degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men.

Q. What is the difference between a licentiate and an ordained minister?

A. The licentiate preaches and exhorts only; to him the sacraments are not committed. The

Quarterly Conference votes a license; but for ordination, the recommendations of the Quarterly Conference must be concurred in by the Annual Conference.

Q. What other difference?

A. The Quarterly Conference may refuse to renew a license at the end of a year, and it is thereby withdrawn; but one invested, by ordination, with the rights and character of the ministry can be deprived only on formal arraignment and process.

Q. What time is required before a licentiate can be admitted to the ministerial office?

A. From two to four years—often longer.

Q. Do any licentiates, as a matter of fact, fail to be admitted to that office?

A. Some do, and very properly; otherwise it would be no *trial* at all. The ecclesiastical bodies charged with the responsibility of advancing to holy orders those by whom they are to be instructed and governed ought to be very careful and conscientious in this matter.

Q. You have laid down three tests for one professing to be called of God to preach— gifts, grace, and usefulness. Do these tests apply to licensing, or to ordaining?

A. Properly to ordaining; for the last test—Has he fruit?—cannot be a condition precedent to licensing. One must preach before he can have the fruit of preaching.

Q. Must we, therefore, *license* every one who professes to be called?

A. Not by any means. The first two conditions—gifts and grace—may be ascertained

with some clearness beforehand. And even the third may be indicated if the *exhorter* went before the *preacher*, as generally he ought to do.

Q. What does the Apostle John say?

A. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Section II.

A Distinction Between Ministers and People.

Q. Has not the doctrine of a divine call to the ministry been objected to among so-called Christians?

A. Yes; formalists have objected even to the doctrine of the new birth by the Spirit, and also to the witness of the Spirit—as fanatical. It is not strange if they object to a call to the ministry by the same Spirit.

Q. What shall we say to their charge of presumption against one who professes to be moved by the Holy Ghost to undertake the work of the ministry?

A. It is much greater presumption in any one to undertake this awful work on his *own motion*. "Who is sufficient for these things?" Well may the strongest tremble when surveying the responsibility of him who has the care of souls, for which he must give account.

Q. What is the experience, generally, of those who are truly called to the ministry?

A. They are overwhelmed with the view of it which is vouchsafed to them. They compare

its greatness with their littleness—its holiness with their unworthiness—its difficulties with their weakness—and nothing but a conviction of duty could impel them to it.

Q. What was the language of the Apostle to the Gentiles?

A. "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

Q. What, then, may be said of a call to the ministry?

A. It is not justly chargeable with fanaticism, for reasonable and practical tests are applied. It does not argue presumption, but the contrary. Instead of fostering pride, the profoundest humility is associated with the conviction of this call.

Q. Is the Christian ministry in any proper sense a profession?

A. No. A man may say, "I will make this son a farmer, and that one a lawyer, or a doctor, or a mechanic;" but he may not say of another, "I will make him a preacher."

Q. How, then, shall we class the ministry?

A. It is not a *profession*, but a *vocation*. The true minister is *called* of God. Jesus said to his first ministers, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit."

Q. Ministers are spoken of in the New Testament as "embassadors"—what are the points in common between them?

A. Embassadors do not appoint themselves, neither do they represent themselves. They are not chosen by the people to whom they go.

They are appointed by the sovereign power, or king, that sends them, and by him alone.

Q. What does Paul say of himself and others who were charged with the ministry of reconciliation?

A. "Now then we are embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God."

Q. Has Jesus given us any directions for replenishing the ministry?

A. "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

Q. All earnest Christians are *laborers* in a sense. Have we any warrant in the Bible for regarding ministers as a distinct class of laborers?

A. Yes. In the context of the scripture just quoted Jesus is sending out the seventy evangelists—two and two—without purse or scrip, or the ordinary worldly provision for support. They are to be fed by those for whom they preach, and pray, and minister; "for," said he, "the laborer is worthy of his hire."

Q. What other evidence have we of this distinction?

A. Ministers are spoken of as messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord. They are shepherds, and the people are the flock. They are builders and husbandmen; while to the people it is said, "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." Certain qualifications are laid down for ministers that are not re-

quired of other Christians. Certain charges are addressed to them that are not applicable to the people; and certain promises are made to them as such. In a peculiar and eminent sense they are "laborers together with God."

Q. Does the Church expect of them separation and consecration?

A. In their ordination vows they are solemnly reminded "into how high a dignity and to how weighty an office" they are called, and are exhorted to "apply themselves wholly to this one thing, and to draw all their cares and studies this way, . . . laying aside the study of the world and the flesh."

Section III.

Objections—Duties and Authority of Ministers.

Q. What is the gospel plan of supporting ministers?

A. Those to whom they minister spiritual things are to minister to them carnal things. As in the Old Testament they which waited at the altar were partakers with the altar, "even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Q. What, then, is the duty of the people, in this respect, to their pastors?

A. To supply their temporal wants, so that they may give themselves, without distraction, to prayer and the ministry of the word.

Q. What is the relation of the pastor to the people in respect of ecclesiastical guidance and governance?

A. To pastors is committed the administration of discipline. Therefore Paul says, in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

Q. What other directions of this kind are given?

A. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief."

Q. Do the Holy Scriptures qualify this, on the other side?

A. In his exhortation to the elders, Peter says: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Q. Is this form of government democracy, or aristocracy, or republicanism?

A. It is neither. It is God's way of ordering his spiritual kingdom in this world, which is not amenable to the analogy of human constitutions or institutions.

Q. While no detailed or specific plan of Church government is laid down in the New Testament, but rites and ceremonies may be

adapted to the diversity of countries, times, and manners—for edification—what limitation is there to this liberty?

A. Nothing must be ordained against God's word. Whatever general or particular principles are laid down therein must be observed—whether under a Congregational, Presbyterian, or Episcopal form.

Q. What follows from this, touching the ministry?

A. No form of Church government claiming the warrant of the Holy Scriptures can legislate away the duties and rights, the responsibilities and authority, of the pastoral office. It may be regulated, but cannot be abolished.

Q. What may be replied to the objection that since we see ministers who are not learned or eloquent, therefore God does not select and call them?

A. No doubt human wisdom would choose great and eloquent men only for the propagation of the gospel—and then its success might be attributed to the human means employed. We perhaps, with the world before us to choose from, would have chosen a dozen men like Demosthenes and Cicero, and not the fishermen of Galilee, such as Peter and James and John—plain men, who were criticised as "unlearned and ignorant." But God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.

Q. Because one is called to preach, does it therefore follow that he is qualified?

A. We may not dispense with the use of means in mental preparation and enlighten-

ment—this would be fanaticism. In order to teach, we must learn.

Q. What is Paul's direction to Timothy, a young preacher?

A. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Q. Has the principle that governs the selection of ministers been revealed to us?

A. In part. All souls are the Lord's, and he wants ministers who are in sympathy with the masses of the people—who can reach them, and understand them, and be understood by them. What is denied to pride is granted to humility; and many whom the world esteems not have been able ministers of the New Testament. With a faithful witness of the truth, the Spirit coöperates mightily, and the success of the gospel is thus a proof of its divinity.

Q. What is Paul's account of the matter?

A. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Q. What does he say of his own preaching?

A. "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Q. What does he say of God's rule in choosing human agents in his Church?

A. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but

God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."

Section IV.

Not a Profession, but a Vocation—The Law of Supply.

Q. Why may not the ministry be left, like the professions, to the law of supply and demand, without a divine call?

A. The ministry, as before stated, is a *vocation*, and not a profession; and the general law of demand and supply does not hold here. This fact alone lifts it out of the sphere of the professions.

Q. Will you illustrate this?

A. If in any community there is scarcity of doctors, or lawyers, or mechanics, or merchants, the need of that community will create a demand, and doctors, or lawyers, or mechanics, or merchants, will come in from other places until it is supplied; or men will prepare themselves on the spot for these professions; or some in overcrowded professions will abandon them for what pays better—and so the demand and supply will regulate each other.

Q. Does this apply to preaching?

A. It does not. The more a community *needs* a faithful minister, the less is the demand for his services. The more unrighteous they are, the less they are inclined to receive and support a preacher of righteousness.

Q. What conclusion follows?

A. If the Christian ministry cannot be supplied or replenished on an ordinary basis, it must be on an extraordinary; if not by a natural motion, then by a supernatural—"Moved by the Holy Ghost."

Q. What was the prospect that Nineveh—that great and wicked city—would make out a call for such a minister?

A. The people of Nineveh were ready, doubtless, to welcome a theater troupe, or to send abroad for men-singers and women-singers; to employ physicians for healing their distempers, and lawyers for settling their disputes, and merchants for providing their luxuries, and mechanics for building and adorning their palaces—the demand would be according to the scarcity of what was needed; but we see there no tendency to raise up a preacher of righteousness among themselves, or to send abroad for one to denounce their sins, and foretell their doom.

Q. How was their case met?

A. God raised up a prophet in another land. "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." And they repented at his preaching.

Q. What is the divine method of procedure?

A. God reserves to himself the prerogative of calling whom he will, and often thrusts his messenger upon an unwilling people—impelling him by his Spirit, encouraging him by his promise, and sustaining him by his power. The true gospel preacher, in every age, is a man not *sent for*, but *sent*.

Q. The priests of the Old Testament had a lineal succession in one family—the head of which originally was divinely designated—is there any thing like this in the Christian ministry?

A. Since Jesus came and abolished the ceremonial law by fulfilling it, there are properly speaking no *priests*. But even under that dispensation, the *prophet* and not the priest was the true type of the *preacher*, under the dispensation of the Spirit.

Q. Wherein did the prophet differ from the priest?

A. In many things. The priest could be of the tribe of Levi only; the prophet was taken from any tribe, or place, or occupation. The priest was by succession, and *must* be a priest's son; but the prophet was directly called of God, and it was not necessary that he should be a prophet's son. The prophet had a wider as well as higher commission than the priest; he reproved kings and princes, and people and priests. Many of the warnings of the prophets were directed to the corrupt priesthood. Preaching is sometimes called prophesying.

Q. Does this Church everywhere and always recognize a faithful ministry as the special gift of God?

A. Everywhere and always, both in prayer and thanksgiving. In the ordinal for elders—the highest order of the Christian ministry—after acknowledging God's infinite love and goodness in making perfect our redemption by the death and resurrection of his Son, and sending abroad into the world his apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors, by whose labor and ministry he has gathered together a great flock, it is added: "For these so great benefits of thy eternal goodness, and for that thou hast vouchsafed to call these thy servants here present to the same office and ministry appointed for the salvation of mankind, we render unto thee most hearty thanks."

Q. In examining, licensing, and ordaining men, does the Church *make* preachers?

A. No: the Church, according to the order and the authority belonging to her, ascertains whom God has called, and coöperates with them in preparing for and doing their work, and accredits them to her members and to the world at large.

Q. Of this doctrine—a divine call to the ministry—what may be said in general?

A. It is wholesome and full of comfort. The hope of the Church and of the world is in it. Hierarchies may become corrupt and the people backslidden, the forms of religion may become lifeless and no power be in them; but God reserves the prerogative of putting his Spirit upon

men and sending them forth to quicken the dead and renew the face of the Church. Thus the truth is continually issuing, fresh and pure, from its source, and God maintains witnesses for himself in the world.

CHAPTER VII.

PREACHERS, LOCAL AND TRAVELING.

SECTION I.

LICENSE—PROBATION—DEACON'S AND ELDER'S ORDERS.

QUESTION. How is a license to preach obtained?

ANSWER. From the Quarterly Conference, which has authority to license proper persons to preach.

Q. What are the conditions?

A. No person can be licensed to preach without the recommendation of the Church of which he is a member, or of the leaders' meeting. Nor can any one be licensed without first being examined in the Quarterly Conference on the subject of doctrines and discipline, and giving satisfactory evidence of his knowledge of the ordinary branches of an English education.

Q. How is the license authenticated?

A. By the signatures of the President and of the Secretary of the Conference.

Q. For how long is it given?

A. One year; at the end of which time it must be renewed by the Quarterly Conference, or it expires by limitation.

Q. By what name is one called who is acting under this license?

A. A licentiate; sometimes, a local preacher

Q. What is the time of probation of a local preacher for the office of a deacon?

A. A local preacher is eligible to the office of a deacon after he has preached four years from the time he received a license, and has obtained a recommendation from the Quarterly Conference.

Q. What is the time of probation of a local deacon for the office of an elder?

A. A local deacon is eligible to the office of an elder after he has preached four years from the time he was ordained a deacon, and has obtained a recommendation from the Quarterly Conference, on examination, certifying his qualifications in doctrine, discipline, talents, and usefulness.

Q. What body acts on this recommendation?

A. The Annual Conference examines into the character and qualifications of the candidate for deacon's or elder's orders thus recommended, and, if satisfied, elects.

Q. What is the time of probation of a traveling preacher for the office of a deacon?

A. Two years in the regular itinerant work.

Q. What for elder's orders?

A. Every traveling deacon must exercise that office for two years before he is eligible to the office of elder.

Q. How is a deacon constituted?

A. By the election of a majority of the Annual Conference, and the laying on of the hands of a Bishop.

Q. How is an elder constituted?

A. By the election of a majority of the Annual Conference, and the laying on of the hands of a Bishop and some of the elders that are present.

Q. Is this time of probation required of all?

A. Of all, except such as may be selected by the Bishop for the missionary work, when the Annual Conference has authority to elect to the deacon's or elder's office sooner, if the Conference judge it expedient.

Section II.

Ordination of Local Preachers.

Q. When were local preachers made eligible to deacon's orders?

A. In 1789 the Discipline gives first notice of the law, in these words: "The Bishop has obtained liberty, by the suffrages of the Conference, to ordain local preachers to the office of deacons."

Q. When did local preachers become eligible to elder's orders?

A. Not until 1812. This law was passed by the first delegated General Conference.

Q. What is the duty of local preachers?

A. To aid the traveling preacher in charge of the circuit, station, or mission to which they belong, in supplying the people with the ministry of the word.

Q. By what method is this to be done?

A. It is recommended that the pastor, as soon as he enters on his work, shall ascertain what

amount of service they are able and willing to perform; he may then draw up a plan by which their labors shall be regulated; and they report, annually, in writing the extent and result of their labors to the Quarterly Conference.

Q. What is the practice of the British Wesleyans?

A. The English Methodists never *ordain* local preachers. So long as any one continues in that relation he is strictly a lay preacher. Those only are ordained to whom the care of souls is committed, and who "apply themselves wholly to this one thing."

Q. What is their manner of licensing?

A. After due probation and examination the question is proposed that the person "be taken on the plan as a regular local preacher."

Q. What is this plan?

A. It is a paper regularly arranged in columns and squares in which are inserted the names of all the local preachers opposite to the respective places of their appointments, and headed by the dates of the month. Thus it is known at what place and time each one is to preach. One of these printed plans is furnished every local preacher.

Q. How may this difference between the practice of the English and American Methodists be accounted for?

A. In our widely-scattered population the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper would seldom, if ever, be within reach of some people, if they depended on their ordained pastors only for these blessings. Local preachers

in frontier settlements have often been instrumental in planting the Church by preaching the pure word of God; and the power of administering the ordinances has been found useful and edifying in their hands under such circumstances.

Q. Are there any evidences in our Ordinal for Elders that it was originally intended only for pastors, or those who were devoted to the care of souls?

A. Several: for instance, where the person presented to be ordained elder is addressed as one who has "clearly determined, by God's grace, to give himself wholly to this office," "applying himself wholly to this one thing," "drawing all his cares and studies this way," determined, out of the Scriptures, "to instruct the people committed to his charge;" and promises to "minister the sacraments and the *discipline* of Christ," to maintain peace and love, "especially among them that are, or shall be, committed to his charge"—"laying aside the study of the world and the flesh." These vows have deterred some local preachers from seeking ordination to the eldership.

Q. Of the two methods—the English and the American—which is the better?

A. Our English brethren, with a more compact territory and organization, have found it expedient to ordain pastors only, supporting them as such, and holding them to one work, and forbidding them to keep shop, or to trade, or follow professions—at the same time accepting the help of a large and useful class of *lay*

preachers, who are at liberty to follow secular business for a livelihood. But the necessities and peculiarities of American civilization made it expedient, after some hesitation, for our branch of the Church to authorize the same class of lay preachers to administer the sacraments, even though the practice may not literally comport with the Ritual.

Q. Is there evidence in the original enactment showing that it was to meet a necessity?

A. The law of 1812 prescribed that the recommendation should be made by at least "two-thirds of the Quarterly Conference;" and besides certifying to talents and usefulness, should also certify to "the necessity of his official services as an elder in the circuit where he resides."

Section III.

Difference Between Local and Traveling Preachers.

Q. What is the difference, officially, between a local and a traveling preacher?

A. In part, it appears in the two descriptive words—*local* and *traveling*. The local preacher stays in one place—at home—preaching wherever it is convenient, and as often as it is convenient. The extent of his obligation to the ministry allows him to pursue secular business, and thus to provide for his own sustenance.

Q. What is required of the other?

A. The traveling preacher, by his obligation, holds himself in readiness to go wherever the

wants of the Church demand; in the exercise of his ministry to act in all things not according to his own will, but to employ his time in the manner the ecclesiastical authorities direct.

Q. Is there any other difference between local and traveling preachers?

A. The preachers who thus hold themselves at the bidding of the Church, devoting their time and labor to its service, cannot pursue secular callings for their sustenance, and must be supported by the Church—according to the divine rule.

Q. Moving as these do, or are liable to do, from place to place, how are they provided with homes?

A. The theory of this polity, when fully realized, requires that homes be provided by the Church, called parsonages, manses, or rectories.

Q. Are local preachers ever employed to do the work of pastors?

A. They are occasionally so employed, by special agreement, on account of the scarcity or disability of traveling preachers; and then they are temporarily clothed with the authority of pastors, and paid on the same principle.

Q. To what court, or tribunal, is a local preacher amenable for his moral and official conduct?

A. To the Quarterly Conference of which he is a member, and his appeal lies to the Annual Conference.

Q. To what court, or tribunal, is a traveling preacher accountable?

A. To the Annual Conference; and he has an appeal to the General Conference.

Q. In what other respects is the traveling ministry distinguished from the local?

A. Since from the former the Church must draw pastors and superintendents, not only greater consecration, but higher qualification, is required of them as a class: though there are local preachers eminent for talents and learning.

Q. In what does this qualification consist?

A. On his trial entrance into the traveling connection a preacher must pass an examination not required in the local ranks. And every year, for four succeeding years, he is required to prosecute a prescribed course of study before advancing to deacon's and elder's orders, or attaining to full membership in the Annual Conference.

Q. Can this requirement be enforced?

A. Before any traveling preacher is ordained deacon or elder, he must pass an approved examination upon the course of study prescribed by the Bishops for candidates for the ministry; and in no case can a vote be taken to elect any one to orders until he is recommended by the examining committee.

Q. Has any difference been indicated by the civil authorities?

A. In some instances, both in Great Britain and in America, it has been decided that a rule forbidding ministers of the gospel being members of the civil Legislature does not debar local or lay preachers.

Q. Where are local preachers counted in Annual and General Conference representation?

A. They are included under the head of lay delegates, because, in the general classification of the Church into pastors and people, they fall on that side.

Q. How can preachers who are assigned to the charge of Church-schools, editorship of religious newspapers, missionary secretaryships, and such like, be classed with pastors?

A. Because they answer to the general terms and conditions of traveling preachers. They do not choose their own appointments; they may be changed from place to place. Holding themselves at the Church's bidding, they are detailed to this service, which, if not in the pastorate, yet is necessary to its full success.

Q. What is the whole number of local preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South?

A. Five thousand eight hundred. These constitute a strong arm of the service in the Church militant, and when working in systematic cooperation with their pastors (as many of them do), they contribute greatly to the spread and prevalence of divine truth.

Q. Has any Church but the Methodist adopted this plan of preaching the gospel by other than pastors and ordained ministers?

A. Yes, under different names—as lay evangelists, lay readers, etc. Of these there have been, of late, some eminent instances.

Q. What is the number of traveling preachers?

A. Four thousand and forty-five. These

are said to be in the "regular work" of the ministry.

Q. By what other name are the traveling preachers usually called?

A. Itinerant preachers: from the Latin word *iter*, or *itinerarius*—"a journey, a going." And that ecclesiastical system which regulates the appointment of itinerant preachers is called the **Itinerancy.**

CHAPTER VIII.

ITINERANCY—ITINERANT PREACHERS.

SECTION I.

QUALIFICATIONS AND VOWS—LOCATION—DISCONTINUANCE.

QUESTION. Into how many classes may itinerant preachers be divided?

ANSWER. Three: Effective, supernumerary and superannuated.

Q. What is an effective preacher?

A. One on the list of those who are ready to do any work in the ministry or go to any place that may be assigned.

Q. What is a supernumerary preacher?

A. A supernumerary preacher is one who is so disabled by affliction as to be unable to preach constantly, but is willing to do any work in the ministry which the Bishop may direct, and he may be able to perform.

Q. What is a superannuated preacher?

A. A superannuated preacher is one who is worn out in the itinerant service, and to whom no work is assigned.

Q. What of a preacher who refuses to attend to the work assigned him?

A. This is regarded as a grave offense. If the failure be not justified by sickness, debil

ity, or other unavoidable circumstances, he is liable to be severely censured.

Q. Who is to judge of the excusing or extenuating circumstances?

A. The Annual Conference of which he is a member, which has power, upon investigating the case, to acquit, suspend, locate, or expel him.

Q. Suppose a preacher be unwilling to submit to the hardships of the itinerancy, or to take the risk of an unpleasant appointment?

A. The association is voluntary. After filling his last appointment to the satisfaction of the Annual Conference, and before the next appointment is announced, any traveling preacher can call for an honorable location; and the Conference is obliged to grant it to him.

Q. What, then, is his position?

A. He retires, of his own will, to the ranks of the local ministry, whence he came, and where he can choose his own field of labor.

Q. What may be done when a traveling preacher is complained of as being so unacceptable, inefficient, or secular, as to be no longer useful in his work?

A. The Conference to which he belongs investigates the case, and if it appear that the complaint is well founded, and he do not give the Conference satisfaction that he will amend or voluntarily retire, it may locate him without his consent.

Q. Can a traveling preacher be located "without his consent" as a censure for immorality?

A. He cannot be; for that would be casting

reproach upon the *moral* character of the local ministry, which must be as irreproachable as that of the traveling ministry.

Q. What, then, is the significance of location in such a case?

A. Certain qualities are required for the itinerant work—power to endure hardness, consecration, administrative ability, patience and courage for perplexities, and such gifts of preaching as will make one acceptable, not to a few only, but to all the congregations in a circuit. A person may be found lacking in these respects, who nevertheless can be useful to particular communities, with the lessened area and responsibility of a local preacher.

Q. What is the position of one who has been located without his consent?

A. He is remitted, in good moral standing, to the community where he lives, which has power to depose him from the ministry if he should there prove unacceptable or inefficient.

Q. There is, then, a probation for the *itinerancy* distinct from the probation for orders?

A. Yes; before a local deacon or elder can be admitted into full connection he must have been employed at least two successive years in the regular itinerant work, and pass an approved examination on the course of study prescribed by the Bishops for candidates for the itinerant ministry.

Q. What method is prescribed in admitting a preacher into full connection at the Conference?

A. After solemn fasting and prayer, every person proposed shall then be asked, before the Conference, certain questions touching his Christian experience, and his willingness to be subject to the discipline of the Church—special emphasis being laid on the requirements of the itinerancy.

Q. Which is the final requirement the candidate assents to?

A. "Above all, if you labor with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory."

Q. What might this clause be called?

A. The article of enlistment into the itinerancy.

Q. How is this ceremony concluded?

A. If he give satisfactory answers, the Conference, by a vote of the majority, may admit him into full connection.

Q. If the Conference is not satisfied at the end of two years' trial, what is done?

A. He is discontinued, or continued on trial a longer time.

Q. What becomes of those who fail?

A. Their names appear on the Minutes as "discontinued," and they fall back into the local ranks.

Q. Is this possible result foreseen?

A. Yes; the Discipline thus addresses every one in the beginning: "Observe!—This relation of being on trial embraces the requisites of a competent pastorate, and must apply as

well to proper administrative qualifications as to acceptable preaching ability. One on trial may be discontinued for want of efficiency in either of these respects, without doing him any wrong; otherwise it would be no trial at all."

Q. What is the custom of the British Methodists?

A. That the candidate must travel four years upon trial, "during which time he must not marry."

Section II.

Probation—Passage of Character—Object of Both.

Q. The itinerancy has two ways of preserving a body of men fitted for its special work—what are they?

A. First, *Probation*—which prevents those who are unfit from entering; second, *Involuntary location*—which rids it of those who, after entrance, become secular, inefficient, or unacceptable.

Q. If a preacher on trial, otherwise of good promise, fails in health, ought he to be admitted?

A. He is shown to be physically unfit for the itinerancy—unequal to that service, and ought not to be admitted.

Q. What of admitting one into full connection and then placing him on the supernumerary list?

A. By such an act an Annual Conference

would say: "On trial we find him fit for itinerant work, and yet unfit; he is able, and yet unable; he is competent, and yet incompetent."

Q. Suppose such a one be put on the superannuated list?

A. That would be worse. He may be worthy and worn out, but he has not been "worn out in the itinerant service." There is more than a contradiction here—it is an injustice.

Q. Injustice to whom?

A. Injustice to the Church at large, and especially to the superannuated preachers who are indeed *superannuated*.

Q. How is this?

A. The Church engages to do no more while her pastors labor than to *support* them. When they are worn out in her service, and can labor no more, the Church cares for them by raising, every year, a fund for the relief of superannuated preachers, as well as for the widows and orphans of itinerant preachers. The more the claimants on this fund, the less relief it gives to each.

Q. What is the better course in dealing with those whose probation brings to light either physical, mental, or moral unfitness for the itinerancy?

A. To lay them aside at once, so they may turn to other pursuits for a livelihood, and not encourage them to go farther where they will be an incumbrance and a burden.

Q. Is there any injustice in putting a newly-admitted itinerant on the supernumerary list?

A. Yes; supernumeraries, by and by, fall on

the superannuated list, and become claimants on that sacred fund.

Q. Is there any other objection?

A. Yes; to grant the peculiar franchises and privileges of itinerant preachers to one who cannot bear, and has never borne, the peculiar labors and responsibilities of the itinerancy, is an injustice to the whole body of local preachers who do not share those franchises and privileges.

Q. What is meant by the "passage of character" in Annual Conference proceedings?

A. Every itinerant, annually, is subjected to the inquiry: Is he blameless in life and in official administration? If, upon report of his conduct and labors, he is blameless, then his "character passes."

Q. What is the object of this examination?

A. To preserve a pure ministry and an efficient pastorate to the Church.

Q. Is this practice peculiar to Methodism?

A. It is, for a reason. In Churches where the people call and settle and dismiss their pastors, it requires time to get acquainted; they send committees of inquiry, or have the candidate preach "trial sermons," or take him for a season as a "supply."

Q. Could the itinerant plan be worked in this way?

A. It could not. A traveling preacher is liable to be sent among strangers, who are expected to receive him at once into their confidence; and this they can do when he goes to them indorsed up to that time, in life and official ad-

ministration, by those who have had knowledge of him in both respects.

Q. In changing preachers, how is it provided that no time be lost from the work?

A. Every itinerant brings up to the Conference a plan of the circuit he has traveled, containing the several churches, societies, and preaching-places on it, the list of official members, subscribers to Church periodicals, and other necessary information; and this plan he hands over to his successor, who enters at once upon his labors where his predecessor left off, finding appointments put out for him in advance.

Section III.

Interchange of Pastors—The Principle and Practice.

Q. What is a peculiarity of Methodism?

A. The itinerancy—involving a systematic interchange of pastors.

Q. What is the opposite theory called?

A. A settled ministry, or pastorate.

Q. Is it *settled* in fact?

A. It is not. And the efforts to get rid of a pastor who is not satisfactory to a majority or large minority of the congregation are fruitful of schism and strife.

Q. What is the condition of a Methodist congregation with a pastor not satisfactory to a majority or large minority?

A. Those who are not pleased need not resort

to unpleasant measures to dislodge him. They can wait patiently the shortest term.

Q. How is it with a congregation where the pastor is very acceptable?

A. It was the system of itinerancy that sent him to them, and he will likely abide there the longest term allowed by the law. When he leaves it is to build up some other portion of the common Church.

Q. What is the advantage of itinerancy where pastor and people are not suited?

A. The time is short, and the removal is accomplished without friction.

Q. What is the advantage in the case of the most acceptable preachers?

A. It passes them over the widest surface, and gives the Church at large the impress and benefit of her ablest ministry.

Q. How do Churches holding the theory of a *settled* pastorate compare, in fact, with Methodist itinerancy?

A. It is seen in many communities that within a given time their pastors have been changed as often as ours—with this difference: One changes by rule, and the other against rule.

Q. What is the principle of itinerancy?

A. The greatest good to the greatest number. In this way the most people can be reached and saved by the gospel.

Q. What are some of its subsidiary advantages?

A. It gives freshness and variety to preachers and to people, and thus meets a want of

human nature that cannot be ignored without loss. It prevents stagnation. John Wesley said that the congregations got as dead as a stone when his preaching was confined to the same people for a long time together. A judicious interchange among *settled* pastors is beginning to be a felt want in the other Churches.

Q. How does the itinerancy agree with the diversity of gifts?

A. The philosophy of the system is therein seen. No preacher has all the gifts of the Spirit; but as the Scripture saith, "Every man hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner and another after that." Itinerant preachers supplement each other. A congregation ministered to by several, in turn, is in favorable condition for an all-sided culture and a full proclamation. "All are yours"—whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas—and you need them all.

Q. How is the itinerancy maintained?

A. On the grounds of unity and concession, among people and preachers.

Q. Will you explain this?

A. All the societies and congregations are *one Church*. The preachers all make up *one body of pastors*. From the latter are drawn those who serve the former, and, as nearly as possible, the right man for the right place.

Q. How is the distribution effected?

A. By mutual concession this is left to an umpire, a president, a superintendent, selected by both—the Bishop, who, with the advantage of the best counsel as to the condition, wishes,

and wants of preachers and people, makes the appointments.

Q. What length of time may an itinerant minister remain in one charge?

A. Up to 1804 no limit was fixed by law; though the practice was to change every year, and often twice a year. After that, no traveling preacher could remain in the same circuit or station more than two years successively.

Q. What is the law now?

A. In 1866 the limitation was extended to four years.

Q. What is it among the British Methodists?

A. Three years—so fixed in their constitution since 1791.

Q. Are pastors and people brought together promptly?

A. There are no preachers waiting to be called, and no Churches with vacant pulpits; but every pastor has a Church and every Church a pastor under the itinerancy. The same day one pastor is relieved of a charge another is installed.

Section IV.

Some Examples and Results of Itinerancy.

Q. Where do we find great examples of itinerancy?

A. In the apostolic age of the Christian Church. Paul was a model itinerant preacher

Q. Who are its best examples in modern times?

A. The Methodist preachers in America. They planted the Church along the Atlantic slope, and have kept up with the ever-moving tide of emigration westward, thus contributing, under God, more than any other ministry to making our civilization *Christian.*

Q. Is this testimony generally agreed to?

A. The public, and other Churches, now see and acknowledge that the self-sacrifice and aggressiveness of itinerancy were a providential development to meet the wants of the population of the United States and Territories. A distinguished Universalist said, "Itinerant preachers have saved the Valley of the Mississippi from heathenism."

Q. Will you name the most eminent?

A. In nearly every State and community the rise and progress of the Church are associated with the labors of some one of this class of Christ's servants. Bishop Asbury has not been excelled.

Q. Mention a few particulars concerning him.

A. Beginning his ministry on our continent in Pennsylvania in 1771, he died, on a journey through Virginia, in 1816. His circuit was from New England southward to Georgia, and westward to Tennessee and Kentucky, which he made annually for thirty years. He crossed the Alleghany Mountains sixty times; and it is estimated that he traveled two hundred and seventy thousand miles, for the most part on horseback; preached sixteen thousand four hundred and twenty-five sermons, besides lectures and exhortations innumerable; sat in two

hundred and twenty-four Annual Conferences; and ordained four thousand preachers.

Q. Is there an historical connection between itinerancy and revivals?

A. They promote each other. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed," is the record in The Acts of the Apostles under the itinerancy. The Reformation in the sixteenth century is no exception. The religious movement of the eighteenth century shows the Wesleys and Whitefield, and their co-laborers, itinerating through Great Britain and Wales.

Q. Were the world converted, would it not then be best to have a settled ministry?

A. Possibly; but the time has not yet come for entertaining that question.

Q. As between an itinerant and a settled pastorate, on which side does the advantage lie?

A. Both have their advantages. The latter is more favorable to the establishment of Churchism—the former, to the spread of Christianity.

Q. Which owes the more to the other?

A. Undoubtedly the itinerancy not only supports its own movement, but its fruits contribute largely to the support of the settled pastorate.

Q. Might not a few Churches and pastors, who have been developed under the itinerancy, do better *now* for themselves without it?

A. As a general rule, the system sends better pastors to the Churches than they could get for themselves, and secures better appointments for the preachers than they could get for themselves.

Q. But what of the possible exceptions?

A. Independent Methodist Churches are a failure by experiment. The loss of fellowship and connectionalism is not compensated by the privilege of negotiating for their own pastors. The system under which spiritual life begins and is developed is the best for its continuance.

Q. What of the Independent pastors?

A. They cannot fare better than their charges; isolation is an irreparable hurt to both. Moreover, the preacher whose rare gifts would secure the best appointment, and sustain him there for a long and unlimited pastorate, can lay out his life and labor to greater purpose by delivering his force upon several important points instead of one.

Q. What are the results of itinerancy?

A. In Great Britain the first Methodist Conference was held in 1744, and the membership reached twenty thousand about twenty years after. Methodism was despised and persecuted. To-day it is the leading Protestant power in that land, next to the Established Church, having its missionary stations over the world, and numbering, in all its branches, six thousand itinerant ministers, thirty-five thousand local or lay preachers, and a million members.

Q. What has been its progress in the United States?

A. The Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Protestant Episcopalians, were here nearly a hundred years before Methodism. Each of them had colleges and seminaries in operation. In 1775 there were only three thou-

sand one hundred and forty-eight Methodists in America. The Church Census of 1883 stands thus:

Methodists, of all branches	4,165,723
Baptists, of all branches	2,394,742
Presbyterians	891,458
Congregationalists	387,619
Protestant Episcopalians	308,591

Q. What is the showing of Church property by the last United States Census (1870)?

A. It presents officially these facts:

	Churches.	*Sittings.*	*Value Property.*
Methodist, all branches	21,387	6,528,209	$69,854,121
Baptist, all branches	13,962	4,360,135	41,608,198
Protestant Episcopal	2,601	991,051	36,514,549
Congregational	2,715	1,117,212	25,069,698
Presbyterian, all branches	7,076	2,698,244	53,265,258
Roman Catholic	3,806	1,990,514	60,985,566

Q. What is the summing up of the tables from which these figures are taken?

A. That one-third of all the Church organizations and buildings, and nearly one-fifth of the whole property, belong to Methodism.

CONCLUSION: This is, in part, one hundred years of Methodist *Itinerancy.*

CHAPTER IX.

EPISCOPACY—BISHOPS.

SECTION I.

EXECUTIVE DUTIES—GENERAL, NOT DIOCESAN

QUESTION. Whence comes the name Bishop?

ANSWER. From the Saxon word *bischop;* the original word, *episcopos*, is Greek, and means a *superintendent.*

Q. How is a Bishop constituted?

A. By the election of the General Conference, and the laying on of the hands of three Bishops, or at least of one Bishop and two elders.

Q. What are the duties of a Bishop?

A. To preside in the General and Annual Conferences; to fix the Appointments of the preachers; to form the Districts, circuits, and stations; and to ordain Bishops, elders, and deacons.

Q. Are the Bishops itinerant?

A. An itinerant general superintendency is a requirement of the constitution of Episcopal Methodism. The Bishops travel at large among the people, in order to preach, and to oversee the spiritual and temporal interests of the Church.

Q. What if a Bishop cease traveling?

A. If he cease traveling, without the consent of the General Conference, the law says, "He

shall not thereafter exercise the episcopal office."

Q. To what body is he amenable?

A. To the General Conference, which meets every fourth year.

Q. How does this supreme judicatory administer discipline in the case of a Bishop?

A. A standing committee on Episcopacy, composed of one member from every Annual Conference, reviews his past four years, under the inquiry, Is he blameless in life and official administration? And this committee reports to the General Conference, which has power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary.

Q. As the chief executive, what is the duty of a Bishop?

A. To see that all the rules and regulations enacted by the General Conference are faithfully carried out, in every part of the Church.

Q. In what does a diocesan differ from a general Episcopacy?

A. The former, like that of the Protestant Episcopal Church, is confined to a limited locality—as a State or portion of a State, out of which the Bishop has no jurisdiction. The latter is conterminous with the whole Church.

Q. What mistakes are made, by uninformed people, on this subject?

A. They inquire sometimes concerning a Methodist Bishop, Which is his diocese? or, What State is he the Bishop of? or, Where does he preside?

Q. How is the Episcopal work carried on?

A. The Methodist Episcopacy is a unit: it is a joint general superintendency. Enough Bishops are chosen to supervise the whole work, and these annually divide out the Church territory between them.

Q. How is this division made?

A. Into Episcopal Districts, containing four or five Annual Conferences, more or less; and to each of these Districts a Bishop is assigned, by arrangement among themselves.

Q. Does the same person preside over an Episcopal District for any length of time?

A. The Districts are often changed, as the needs of the growing work require; and a Bishop seldom serves the same one two years in succession. He presides and travels this year in the Valley of the Mississippi, next year he may be assigned to the Pacific coast, or be among the Conferences lying on the Gulf of Mexico.

Q. What are the advantages of this system?

A. The Bishops, itinerating most extensively of all (according to the philosophy of itinerancy), they complement each other's labors and influence. The unity of the Church is maintained, and also uniformity of usage, and doctrine, and administration.

Q. Explain this more fully.

A. On the diocesan plan, a Bishop cannot draw help from a strong to a weak point beyond his narrow boundary. If he be lacking or excessive in any quality—if his teaching be erroneous, or his practice singular—the personal influence is impressed upon the diocese.

Thus we see, in the Protestant Episcopal Church, diversities near akin to schism: one diocese, evangelical; another, semi-popish. Low-church, High-church, and Broad-church, are diocesan outgrowths.

Q. How else are these parties, arising under diocesan Episcopacy, described?

A. The *Platitudinarians*, they are generally Calvinistic; the *Altitudinarians*, they are near akin to the Romanists; and the *Latitudinarians*, they are as nearly related to Rationalists.

Q. What is the origin of Episcopacy?

A. It is a very ancient, if not apostolical, form of Church government. Jerome, the most learned of the Latin Fathers, in a passage often quoted, says presbyters and Bishops were formerly the same; but when the devil incited men to make divisions in religion, that the roots of dissension might be plucked up, "a usage gradually took place that the chief care should devolve upon one."

Q. Which, then, is the better form of Episcopacy?

A. If to promote unity and repress schism be the main end and purpose of this form of ecclesiastical polity, the better form is that which is *general*, not that which is *diocesan*.

Q. Does our constitution guard this point?

A. Among the half dozen restrictions placed upon the General Conference is this: "They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away Episcopacy, or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency."

Section II.

Episcopal College—Joint Superintendency—Judicial Functions—Trial.

Q. By what phrase is the collected body of Bishops called?

A. The College of Bishops, or Episcopal College.

Q. How often do they meet?

A. Annually; when, besides dividing out the work for the coming year, they take account of the state of the Church; enter into counsel and review; report cases that have come up for adjudication in the several Conferences; and bring the whole administration into harmony—acting as one man and one mind.

Q. Is a Bishop's jurisdiction limited to any District, so that his official acts are not valid beyond it?

A. For the sake of convenience the Bishops divide the work into "Districts;" and by common consent the Bishop who presides at any particular Annual Conference is looked to for any special Episcopal service within its bounds during the Conference-year. But any Episcopal act of any Bishop, in any part of the Connection, at any time, is valid. Of course they uniformly respect each other's action, and are careful not to come into conflict.

Q. What are the judicial duties of a Bishop?

A. To hear and decide appeals of the Quarterly Conferences on questions of law, when he shall be presiding in an Annual Conference, and to decide all questions of law coming before

him in the regular business of an Annual Conference.

Q. Is there provision for appeal and review?

A. When the Bishop has decided a question of law, the Conference has the right to appeal from such decision to the College of Bishops, whose decision is final.

Q. How is uniformity secured in decisions not appealed from?

A. Each Bishop reports in writing to the Episcopal College, at an annual meeting, such decisions as he has made, subsequently to the last preceding meeting; and all such decisions, when approved by the College of Bishops, are recorded in a permanent form, and published; and when so approved, recorded, and published, they become authoritative interpretations or constructions of the law.

Q. What provision exists for guarding the constitution?

A. When any rule or regulation is adopted by the General Conference, which, in the opinion of the Bishops, is unconstitutional, the Bishops may present to the Conference which passed said rule or regulation their objections thereto, with their reasons, in writing; and if the General Conference shall, by a two-thirds vote, adhere to its action on said rule or regulation, it shall then go down to the Annual Conferences; and must, before becoming a law, receive the concurrent recommendation of three-fourths of all the members of the several Annual Conferences, who shall be present and voting.

Q. Wherein is the trial of a Bishop peculiar?

A. In that he has no appeal. If a private member is expelled, he may appeal from the committee that tried him to the Quarterly Conference; the local preacher may appeal to the Annual Conference; and the traveling preacher to the General Conference.

Q. How is this accounted for?

A. Because, as the highest officer in the Church, he is tried by the highest court, beyond which there is no tribunal for review and correction.

Q. Are there any securities for justice in this court of original jurisdiction which may be regarded as equivalent to an appeal from the sentence of a lower court?

A. Several. The General Conference, the original and the final court for the trial of a Bishop, is made up of men from every part of the Church, and is therefore free from local prejudice.

Q. What else?

A. Convening once in four years, and usually in session for nearly a month, this body, when sitting as a court, is comparatively free from errors arising from haste and heat of passion.

Q. What else?

A. This court is made up of mature men, eminent for intelligence and moral character—representative men, who are themselves the makers and expounders of law. The source of numerous errors in lower courts is thus cut off.

Q. What else?

A. From the nature of the case, this court

acts in the eyes of the whole Church, and has every reason that can be drawn from this fact to proceed circumspectly.

Q. And, finally?

A. The General Conference is composed of an equal number of lay and clerical delegates. The ministers and laymen deliberate in one body; but upon a call of one-fifth of the members of the Conference, the lay and clerical members vote separately, and no measure can be passed without the concurrence of a majority of both classes of representatives.

Q. What is the conclusion?

A. That a Bishop may safely trust to this tribunal for a first and final hearing; and if in the lower courts there were such guarantees for justice, there would be less use for forms of appeal.*

Q. How long has this peculiarity of no appeal existed, in the case of a Bishop?

A. From the beginning of our ecclesiastical jurisprudence. This was, and continued to be, the law when the fathers of American Methodism adopted the constitution in 1808, one article of which, referring to other ministers, thus restricts the legislature: "They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee, and of an appeal."

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*Though little importance is attached to analogy with the civil government, in treating matters ecclesiastical, yet those who are so inclined may possibly find it here: The chief executive and judicial officers of a State, or of the United States, when impeached, are tried by the highest court, and from its sentence they have no appeal.

Section III.

Prelacy—Episcopal and non-Episcopal Methodists —Wesley's Views.

Q. In *ordaining*, do Methodist Bishops differ from those of the Protestant Episcopal and some other Churches?

A. Yes, in this: A Methodist Bishop can ordain those only who have been examined, approved, and elected to orders by the Conference; he acts not in his own right, but for the Church, in ordaining.

Q. What is the practice of some other Bishops?

A. They judge alone for themselves whom they will ordain or admit to the ministry. And they likewise suspend or depose them from the ministry. This is one mark of prelacy.

Q. What is the Methodist theory of Episcopacy?

A. That it is an expedient form of Church order, promotive of ministerial efficiency, and doctrinal purity, and Christian unity; but it is not *essential* to the existence of a true Church.

Q. What results from this theory?

A. That while we are Episcopal, we hold fellowship with Presbyterian and Congregational Churches; we respect their decent and orderly administration of the sacraments.

Q. How do we receive ministers who offer to unite with us from other Christian Churches, and present proper evidences of ordination according to their rites and usages?

A. After they have been duly recommended, and the Annual Conference is satisfied of their

gifts, grace, and usefulness, and of their agreement with us in doctrine and discipline, they are recognized as in orders without the reïmposition of hands.

Q. What is the "High-church" and exclusive practice of some others?

A. They reördain ministers who come to them from other Churches.

Q. Are all Methodists under an Episcopal form?

A. No; a common classification of Methodists is into Episcopal and non-Episcopal.

Q. Which is the principal body of non-Episcopal Methodists?

A. The Wesleyan Methodists of Great Britain. Their Conference is a body of elders, or presbyters, exercising legislative and judicial powers, with a president annually elected.

Q. Why are they non-Episcopal?

A. Because in England there were Bishops with whose jurisdiction Mr. Wesley would not seem to interfere. In America the case, after the Revolution, was different.

Q. Can you give his words on this point?

A. In his letter explaining the ordination of Thos. Coke as Superintendent, or Bishop, and through him of Francis Asbury, for the Methodists of this country, he said: "As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church."

Q. Accordingly, what did he recommend?

A. That they be organized into an Episcopal Church; and to this end he not only ordained their first Bishop, but made out, by judicious abridgments of the Liturgy and Ritual of the Church of England, forms of ordination for Superintendents, or Bishops, elders, or presbyters, and deacons, and also for the administration of the sacraments; all which our first American General Conference, in 1784, elected and accepted.

Q. What has been said by eminent Wesleyan authority in England?

A. That it is to American Methodism we must look for Wesley's ideal of Church government. Here the scheme most nearly agreeing with his views of the Scriptures and the Primitive Church has been adopted.

Q. How did he express himself on this subject?

A. That "the Episcopal form of Church government is scriptural and apostolical—I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles; but that it is *prescribed* in Scripture, I do not believe." He held, with the most learned and trustworthy scholars and divines, that "neither Christ nor his apostles *prescribed any particular form* of Church government." The Scriptures lay down *general principles*, and leave the details to Christian expediency.

Section IV.

Theories of Episcopacy—Apostolic Succession.

Q. What is the most reasonable account of Episcopacy?

A. That, like the order of deacons, it was developed by the progress, and to meet the wants, of the Church, and at a very early day. The supervising and unifying element of Church government that was furnished by the personal influence of the apostles was thus sought to be supplied after their death. Bishops and presbyters, or elders, were, originally, of the same order; but, as Jerome says, one of the elders was chosen as president, and called Bishop by way of distinction, and some of the functions pertaining to the whole body of presbyters—as ordination, for example—were committed to him, and, like the name, confined to him. Thus he became *primus inter pares*—first among equals.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That the authority to ordain did not originate, and does not inhere, in Bishops as an order, but was derived from the Church, and finally resides there.

Q. Are there any examples of Episcopal ordination in the Primitive Church?

A. In the great Church of Alexandria, from the time of St. Mark, who founded it, to the time of Heraclas, who died A.D. 246, upon the death of a Bishop, the elders of that city elected and ordained another without calling in any other Bishop to do it for them. Their Bishops

were therefore presbyter-bishops—no higher in order than other presbyters, though higher in office.

Q. How was the first Methodist Bishop, Thos. Coke, ordained?

A. After the same manner—by Mr. Wesley, assisted by other presbyters of the Church of England, Sept. 10, 1784.

Q. Was the validity of presbyter ordinations ever allowed in the Church of England?

A. Yes; though Episcopal ordination was preferred, and under the State Church was enjoined and practiced, presbyter ordination, already performed, was allowed and honored, as numerous and high instances show, from the time of Cranmer until the reactionary Restoration under Charles II., when the Ritual now in use was adopted.

Q. Give an instance of authoritative opinion.

A. Archbishop Usher, when asked by the king if he found in antiquity that "presbyters did ordain," replied, "Yes, I will show your majesty more—even where presbyters alone successively ordained Bishops," and pointed to this case at Alexandria.

Q. If by death, expulsion, or otherwise, there be no Bishop remaining in our Church, what would be done?

A. The General Conference would elect a Bishop; and the elders, or any three of them, appointed by the General Conference for that purpose, would ordain him according to our form of ordination.

Q. Have we other examples?

A. The great Reformer, Martin Luther, assisted by three other presbyters, ordained the first Lutheran Bishop, Nicolas Amsdorf, Jan. 20, 1542. Thus was originated the Lutheran Episcopacy.

Q. Is there another theory of Episcopacy?

A. Quite another. It claims that from the apostles' time there have been three divinely-prescribed orders—deacon, presbyter, and Bishop; that the first Bishops, through ordination by apostles, derived authority to ordain from them, directly; that Bishops who have been so ordained, and their successors in unbroken line, and they only, have the right to ordain deacons, and elders, and Bishops; and that none are true ministers of Christ, authorized to administer sacraments, but those who have been ordained, in this line.

Q. What is this called?

A. The Apostolic Succession. Bishop must touch Bishop—and so the genuine commission must be conveyed, in an outward and visible manner, down from the apostles.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That there can be no true ministry, no true Church, no valid sacraments, unless through and by Episcopal authority which has been uninterruptedly transmitted from the apostles. All other ministers, no matter how useful and holy, are schismatics and heretics, usurpers and intruders!

Q. What would be the consequence of a break in this ecclesiastical chain?

A. One break, one missing link, would leave us without ministers, sacraments, or Church.

Q. When did this monstrous dogma make its appearance?

A. This perversion of Episcopacy began to appear in the third century, and attained its full growth in the Middle or Dark Ages. Conspicuously, the Roman Catholics hold this dogma; they also hold the infallibility of the pope, transubstantiation, and the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.

Q. Do any Protestants accept this theory of Episcopacy?

A. A portion of the Church of England; and in this country, a portion of the Protestant Episcopal Church, called "High-church."

Q. Has this chain of succession ever been made out?

A. Never; neither can it be, either by the Scriptures or by history. At this end the links are easily counted; but the farther back we go the more obscurity and doubt do we find until we get into darkness.

Q. Is there any list of these succession Bishops?

A. Several lists have been got up, but they differ from each other. It is mere guess-work. They must run back through fifteen hundred years without authentic records.

Q. What says the learned Archbishop Whately, of the Church of England, on this point?

A. He says: "The transmission of orders from the apostles to an English clergyman of the present day must have been through a great number of intermediate persons. Now, it is probable that no clergyman in the Church of

England can trace up his spiritual genealogy from Bishop to Bishop, even so far back as the time of the Reformation. There remain fifteen or sixteen hundred years during which the history of the transmission of his orders is buried in utter darkness."

Q. Where is the greatest difficulty?

A. At the point of most importance: there is no *staple* to fasten the farther end of the imaginary chain to. It is not agreed which apostle, if any, *began* the list of ordinations.

Section V.

Evils of the Apostolic Succession Theory.

Q. What are some of the results of this theory of Apostolic Succession?

A. Priestly arrogance, and popular superstition, and perversions to popery.

Q. How can it be accounted for that a theory of the Christian ministry so unsupported by reason, or Scripture, or history, finds acceptance?

A. There are certain principles of human nature that favor it: It pleases the "clergy," because it invests them with a mysterious power, an awful sanctity; and this gives them importance apart from moral character and mental ability. The same principle long kept the heathen oracles in credit.

Q. What recommends it to the people?

A. It is a pleasing and captivating fancy—this getting *something* by a direct line from the

holy apostles. They do not know exactly what it is that comes down to them by this *tactual* succession, or how it comes; but the idea of an *unbroken line*, having the holy apostles at the other end, is an easy and promising conception to the unthinking and sentimental.

Q. Will you specify some of the benefits that are promised?

A. That a mysterious virtue accompanies the act of the clergyman (or priest) in baptism, so that regeneration is thereby obtained. This is an easy way, and more to the taste of human nature than by repentance and faith.

Q. What else?

A. The same magic power, transmitted by the succession, enables the officiating clergyman (or priest) to change the bread and wine, in the Lord's Supper, into the real body and blood of Christ; so that there is a saving virtue and efficacy in the mere reception of this sacrament. This is called "the real presence."

Q. What else?

A. As the Apostolic Succession is outward and visible, so the whole system of worship based on it deals in the outward and visible: gorgeous ceremonies, elaborate rites, various vestments, candles, altars, bowings and crossings. Human nature is fond of imposing spectacles; it prefers an outward to an inward religion; it is ever prone to fall back from the spiritual to the ceremonial.

Q. By what names is this system of religion called?

A. *Sacramentarianism*, in view of its exagger-

ation of the sacraments; *Ritualism*, as cultivating an undue dependence upon rites; *Sacerdotalism*, as implying a "priesthood."

Q. What is the root of all these corruptions?

A. A false doctrine of Episcopacy: that there is a set of men descended in an unbroken line by ordination from the apostles, and who alone have a divine right to ordain others in the ministry.

Q. Does the Apostolic Succession secure ministers from embracing and teaching unsound doctrine?

A. Its most ardent advocates do not claim this virtue for it. On the contrary, they allow that many who are in the "succession" hold and teach erroneous doctrine.

Q. Wherein, then, is the benefit of a minister's being in this succession?

A. It is convenient to claim that it resides in those qualities of his ministry which cannot be so readily exposed. Baptism at his hands works inward regeneration: by his manipulations "the real presence" is communicated to bread and wine; absolution, or the forgiveness of sin, pronounced by him, goes farther and means more than if the magic words were pronounced by another. Here is a refuge for superstition and for arrogant assertion.

Q. Will you give the opinion of a few of the most learned among Protestants about the Apostolic Succession?

A. Bishop Stillingfleet, of deep research and eminent authorship, said: "This succession of Rome is as muddy as the Tiber itself."

Q. What other testimony?

A. Bishop Hoadley asserts: "It hath not pleased God, in his providence, to keep up any proof of the least probability, or moral possibility, of a regular, uninterrupted succession; but there is a great appearance, and, humanly speaking, a certainty, that the succession hath often been interrupted."

Q. Quote the words of the learned Archbishop Whately.

A. "There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with approach to certainty, his spiritual pedigree."

Q. What said John Wesley, when vindicating his right to ordain, under providential exigences?

A. "The uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove."

Q. What is the true Apostolic Succession?

A. A ministry of holy life and pure doctrine; of zeal and self-denial, and abundant labors for the salvation of souls and the kingdom of Christ; approved by the Church, and whose seals are from the Holy Ghost.*

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*The "Judicious Hooker," of the sixteenth century, while insisting on ordination, "such as is made by Bishops, which have had their ordination likewise by other Bishops before them, till we come to the very apostles of Christ themselves," nevertheless admits: "There may be sometimes very just and sufficient reason to allow ordination made without a Bishop. . . . . When the exigence of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the Church, which otherwise we would willingly

Section VI.

Anglican, Northern and Southern Methodist Episcopacy.

Q. Will you enumerate some other differences between our Episcopacy and that of other Protestant Churches?

A. In the Church of England, Bishops are virtually chosen by the premier—D'Israeli, Gladstone, Derby, or whoever he may be—and have a palace and yearly salary, ranging from

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keep—where the Church must needs have some ordained and neither hath nor can have possibly a Bishop to ordain; in case of such necessity, the ordinary institution of God hath given ofttimes, and may give, place. And therefore we are not simply, without exception, to urge a lineal descent of power from the apostles, by continued succession of Bishops, in every effectual ordination."

This yields the vital point in the succession theory, and makes that eminent prelatical authority a witness for the validity of Lutheran and Wesleyan ordinations.

Mr. Wesley, so long as the English civil and ecclesiastical government extended over the Provinces of North America, forbore to ordain ministers for the societies of which he was, providentially, the head and founder, though often importuned to do so. After the Revolution which disjoined the Provinces from the British Empire, and erected them into independent States, the case was widely different. There were eighty-three Methodist preachers and fifteen thousand members in America—without ordinances and sacraments; and their wants and desires were again pressed upon him. He said: "Here there are Bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, and but few parish ministers; so that for some hundreds of miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end."

But might he not have obtained the so-called "succes-

$75,000 to $12,000. A Bishop is a member of the House of Lords—a peer of the realm.

Q. How is it in America?

A. The Protestant Episcopal Church in this country claims to have the "succession" from the Anglican Church, and has a diocesan Superintendency, or Episcopacy, whereas ours is general.

Q. What effect has this upon the number of Bishops in each Church?

A. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with some eight hundred and ninety thousand members, has seven Bishops. The Protestant

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sion" for the American Methodists by waiting? It would have proved an unfortunate inheritance—for we have seen how prone men are to overrate that "fable." Nevertheless, willing to keep "the usual ways of the Church," Mr. Wesley did what he could in that direction, before proceeding to meet "the exigence of necessity."

After challenging any one to "point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding those poor sheep in the wilderness," he concludes:

"It has indeed been proposed to desire the English Bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object: 1. I desired the Bishop of London to ordain one only; but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they would ordain them *now*, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free."

Episcopal Church in the United States, with about three hundred and eight thousand members, has sixty-one Bishops.

Q. To whom are they respectively amenable?

A. The Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church are amenable to their own "order;" they can be tried only by Bishops. Our Bishops are amenable to a General Conference composed equally of clerical and lay delegates.

Q. How are the diocesan Bishops addressed?

A. As "Right Reverend," an excessive title, which Methodist Bishops have always declined.

Q. Is there difference of view between Northern and Southerm Methodists on the Episcopacy?

A. Both have general itinerant Superintendents; beyond that there is a difference.

Q. In what particular?

A. Southern Methodism holds that the Episcopacy is, constitutionally, a coördinate part of the Church government. Bishops are officers * and pastors of the whole Church, though elected by the General Conference. By that body also,

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* Eminent writers on ecclesiastical polity claim Episcopacy as an "order," *jure humano*, which, though different from the *jure divino* of the "order" of elders, justifies a third ordination service. Others, who designate it as an "office" only, think a formal and solemn consecration to it agreeable to Acts xiii. Although Barnabas and Saul were accredited ministers of the gospel, they were, nevertheless, by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands, set apart, or separated, to a special work in the ministry. Ordination in that case did not confer a new "order."

acting for the Church, they may be censured even to degradation and expulsion, but only after due form of trial.

Q. What is the position of the other branch of Episcopal Methodism?

A. That a Bishop is an officer of the General Conference—in a sense, its creature; and may be summarily deposed, or set aside, at its will, by a majority vote upon preamble and resolution, without showing cause.

Q. Is this a practical difference?

A. These opposite views were developed, and entered into the controversy which divided the Church, in 1844.

Q. Name the Methodist Bishops from 1784 to 1844, in the order of their election.

A. Coke, Asbury, Whatcoat, McKendree, George, Roberts, Soule, Hedding, Andrew, Emory, Waugh, Morris.

Q. On the division of the Church after 1844 into two independent General Conferences, how stood the Bishops?

A. Bishops Soule and Andrew took position with the Southern body, and Bishops Hedding, Waugh, and Morris, with the Northern.

Q. Name the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the order of their election.

A. William Capers and Robert Paine (1846); Henry B. Bascom (1850); George F. Pierce, Hubbard H. Kavanaugh, and John Early (1854); William M. Wightman, Enoch M. Marvin, David S. Doggett, and Holland N. McTyeire (1866); John C. Keener (1870); Alpheus W. Wilson, Linus Parker, John C. Granbery, and Robert K. Hargrove (1882).

Q. Of these how many are living, and where?

A. Bishop Pierce, Sparta, Ga.; Bishop McTyeire, Nashville, Tenn.; Bishop Keener, New Orleans, La.; Bishop Wilson, Baltimore, Md.; Bishop Parker, New Orleans, La.; Bishop Granbery, Richmond, Va.; Bishop Hargrove, Nashville, Tenn.

Q. Who has been styled the first American Bishop?

A. Francis Asbury. He died March 21, 1816.

Q. Whose episcopate has been the longest?

A. Joshua Soule's: ordained May, 1824, and died March 6, 1867.

Q. Whose term was briefest?

A. Henry B. Bascom's: ordained May, 1850, and died Sept. 8, 1850, having held but one Annual Conference.

Q. Whose terms were last finished?

A. Robert Paine, who died October 20, 1882; and Hubbard H. Kavanaugh, who died March 19, 1884.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRESIDING ELDERSHIP.

SECTION I.

RELATIONS OF THE PRESIDING ELDER TO TRAVELING AND LOCAL PREACHERS.

QUESTION. How is a Presiding Elder appointed?

ANSWER. By the Bishop; but he shall not allow any Elder to preside in the same District more than four years successively.

Q. What are the duties of a Presiding Elder?

A. To travel through his appointed District, in order to preach and to oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church.

Q. How often is he to visit each pastor's charge in his District?

A. Four times a year; when, besides attending the quarterly-meetings, he is to call together the members of the Quarterly Conference, over which he also presides.

Q. What are his relations to the other preachers?

A. In the absence of the Bishop, he is to take charge of all the traveling and local preachers and exhorters in his District.

Q. How far does his jurisdiction extend?

A. If, in the absence of the Bishop, a neces-

sity arises for any of the traveling preachers on his District to be changed, the Presiding Elder changes them. If any preacher dies or leaves his circuit, the Presiding Elder, as far as possible, fills his place with another.

Q. What is required of the Presiding Elder concerning any pastor who neglects his duties?

A. To correct the evil, as far as possible, at the time; and when the inquiry is made, Is he blameless in life and official administration? the Presiding Elder reports to the Annual Conference the names of all the delinquent traveling preachers within his District.

Q. In case a traveling preacher is accused of immorality, in the interval of the Conference, what is the Presiding Elder to do?

A. In the absence of the Bishop, he calls the accused before a committee of investigation, and, if found guilty, suspends him until the session of the Annual Conference, and supplies his place with another preacher.

Q. What is expected of him toward candidates for orders, or for admission on trial, or into full connection?

A. He must direct their attention to those studies prescribed by the Bishops, and give them assistance, if necessary, in preparing for their examination by the committees.

Q. What are the Presiding Elder's duties toward local preachers and exhorters?

A. To take cognizance of all the local preachers and exhorters in each circuit, station, or mission, and to assist the preacher in charge in giving them systematic employment; so that

such labor as they may be able and willing to perform shall be most profitable to the Church; also, through the Quarterly Conference, to inquire annually into the gifts, labors, and usefulness of each by name.

Q. Besides executive, are there any judicial duties attached to this office?

A. The Presiding Elder must decide all questions of law which come up in the regular business of the Quarterly Conference, subject to an appeal to the President of the next Annual Conference. He may require them to be submitted to him in writing.

Q. Over what other body does he preside?

A. He is *ex officio* President of the District Conference, in the absence of a Bishop.

Section II.

His Relations to the Bishop.

Q. In few words, what is the Presiding Elder to do?

A. He is to take care that every part of the Discipline be enforced within his District.

Q. What other directions in the Discipline concerning him?

A. He is "to attend the Bishops when present in his District; and to give them, when absent, all necessary information, by letter, of the state of his District."

Q. During the session of the Annual Conference, what is his work?

A. To present the recommendations of Quar-

terly Conferences for orders, in the local ministry, and for admission on trial; and while other members are free to speak, for or against, *he* is looked to, especially, for information to guide the Conference safely in acting upon all such matters.

Q. What else is required?

A. He is expected to give all necessary information in the "passage of character" of the preachers in his District; and if any of them fail to attend Conference, he must supply the statistical reports of the charge.

Q. What is another and very important duty of the Presiding Elder?

A. To give the Bishop all the information in his possession for the proper making out of the Appointments.

Q. How is this usually done?

A. At certain hours, during the session of the Conference, the Bishop calls together all the Presiding Elders; and in this meeting (styled a "Cabinet-meeting") the wants, and wishes, and fitnesses of pastors and Churches are canvassed, so that a suitable distribution may be made.

Q. How did this office originate?

A. The Bishops are invested with full power to superintend the work at large. But, on the plan of a general superintendency, it is impossible for them to superintend the work in detail. Therefore Presiding Elders, acting under their appointment, were introduced.

Q. Will you explain this?

A. There are in the Methodist Episcopal

Church, South, more than seven hundred and fifty thousand members, scattered throughout thirty-seven Annual Conferences. There are only seven or eight Bishops, charged with the general administration, and who are bound to see that all the rules and regulations of the General Conference are carried out. Now, it is impossible for them, personally, to visit and superintend every portion of this wide field annually; but, with the assistance of one hundred and fifty Presiding Elders, this can be done.

Q. What, then, is the relation of the Presiding Elder to the Bishop?

A. He is an assistant Superintendent, appointed by the Bishop, for a certain time and in a certain region.

Section III.

How Appointed—Why not Elected by Annual Conference.

Q. What is the relation of the Presiding Eldership to the Episcopacy, or General Superintendency?

A. The Presiding Eldership, as Bishop McKendree said, is not separate and distinct from it, but is inseparably connected with a certain important function of the Episcopacy, and included in it.

Q. Why do the Bishops appoint the Presiding Elders?

A. The Bishops alone are held responsible for the administration, to the General Confer-

ence; and therefore the Presiding Elders as their assistants are deputized by them.

Q. What are the powers of a Presiding Elder?

A. He represents the official authority of the Bishop within his District, and in his absence exercises all his functions, ordination excepted.

Q. What would follow if the Presiding Eldership were abolished?

A. Our Episcopacy to be available must, then, be changed from a general to a diocesan Superintendency, and that is forbidden by the constitution.

Q. To whom is a Presiding Elder amenable?

A. Like other itinerants, he is amenable to the Annual Conference for his moral conduct and for the general work of a Methodist preacher; but for his special work, as assistant Superintendent over a District, he is amenable to the Bishop, who has the power of appointment and removal.

Q. May it happen, then, that the Conference approves and the Bishop disapproves the same man?

A. It does so occur sometimes. In answer to the question, Is he blameless in life and official administration? his character passes—that is, the Conference, to the extent of its jurisdiction, approves; but the Bishop may not find him suitable, or the most suitable, for this special service, and so may remove him or decline to reäppoint him.

Q. What of the election of Presiding Elders by the Conference?

A. This question, while our Church polity

was taking shape, was more agitated than any other. Indeed, from 1808 to 1828 it not only produced debate but division. After the most thorough discussion, the present satisfactory basis was adopted.

Q. Upon what principle was this final settlement made?

A. That the General Conference maintains its authority over the whole Church, and carries out its purposes through all the minor judicatories, by an executive arrangement consisting of the Bishops and Presiding Elders. The Bishops are directly responsible for the whole administration; but they must be released from this responsibility if their agents or assistants are appointed by others.

Q. Will you explain the working of this?

A. The General Conference, for example, aiming to raise the standard of the ministry, enacts that no one shall be admitted into the Annual Conference until he passes an approved examination on a prescribed course of study. The Bishops preside over the Annual Conferences; and if that law is disregarded in any case, the Bishop under whose administration this occurred must answer for it to the General Conference. Thus, by calling upon the Bishops the administration in all the Annual Conferences may be brought under the control and inspection of the General Conference.

Q. How does this concern the Presiding Elders?

A. The General Conference ordains that Quarterly Conferences shall be composed of such and

such persons, and do this or not do that. This applies to all of these judicatories, and several thousands of them are held every year. They must all be held by the same rule and mind the same things. There are not enough Bishops to hold them.

Q. Do not Presiding Elders come in here?

A. They do; but suppose each Annual Conference appoints its Presiding Elders: they go forth, some following the law of the General Conference and others not following it. Great confusion and hurt to the Church must ensue.

Q. Cannot the Annual Conference call delinquent Presiding Elders to account?

A. Those who have faithfully carried out the General Conference law may thereby render themselves unpopular with a majority of the Annual Conference, and be rewarded by being turned out of office. On the contrary, some who have disregarded the Connectional law may thereby have won local favor. Different Annual Conferences may take different views of offenses and pursue different courses with offenders. Meantime there is no certainty, steadiness, and uniformity in the administration. The General Conference cannot reach the Presiding Elder, and only indirectly can reach the Annual Conference as a body.

Q. What is Bishop McKendree's description of such a case?

A. Thus, he says, by having the Presiding Elders elected by the Annual Conferences, the General Conference puts it out of its power to carry our system into effect. The legislative

body has no control over the executive. The connection between making rules and enforcing them has been dissolved.*

Q. How does our Discipline compass the matter?

A. The Bishop appoints the Presiding Elders, and if they fail to administer the law they are changed or removed. The Presiding Elders have oversight of the preachers and pastors within their Districts. By calling on the Bishops and holding them to account, the General Conference can enforce its laws in every one of the lower Conferences and courts of the Church.

Q. If a Presiding Elder refuses to carry out in his District the laws enacted by the General Conference, and his Annual Conference should approve him in so doing, what then?

A. The Bishop must remove him and execute the law himself, or appoint another Presiding Elder in his place who will execute the law; else the Bishop may be held amenable to the General Conference for neglect of duty or for malfeasance.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That if Presiding Elders are *elected* at all

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*The seekers of analogy with civil government may find enough of it here for illustration. The United States government exercises its authority over all the people of the several States through officers appointed by the United States: judges, marshals, collectors, post-masters. Were they appointed by and amenable to the States wherein they act, the general government might make laws but would be powerless to enforce them.

it ought to be done by the *General* and not by the *Annual* Conference.

Q. Can you give an item of history on this subject?

A. In the General Conference of 1820 Joshua Soule was elected to the Episcopacy. Before he was ordained a rule was passed making the Presiding Elders elective; whereupon he declined to be consecrated, saying that, with his views, the work of a Bishop in our Church could not be carried out if he had not the appointment of Presiding Elders.

Q. What followed?

A. The Presiding Elder controversy was then at its height. In 1824 it became plain that sound constitutional views were prevailing, and by the General Conference of that year Joshua Soule and Elijah Hedding were elected and consecrated—two of the best Bishops that the Church ever had.

Section IV.

His Relations to the Whole Work.

Q. Are the duties of a Presiding Elder confined to Quarterly Conferences and quarterly-meetings?

A. Not by any means. Bishop McKendree says of the Presiding Elder: "It is his business fully to attend to every part of the execution of discipline." He is interested in every charge, and the pastor is, in some sense, his "aid." Administering discipline, preaching, giving the

sacraments, and pastoral visitation, are all his work. He is at home and clothed with full authority everywhere in his District.

Q. Is he confined to the circuits already formed in his District?

A. He plans for new fields and is an effective leader in home missions, supplying them with the forces at his command. In him the District is most aggressive.

Q. What has this officer done for the itinerant pastorate?

A. He has multiplied and strengthened it greatly. Young men, inexperienced men, unordained men, through his supervision have become available pastors. It would have been inexpedient to send them out alone; but an adviser, helper, director, was at hand in the Presiding Elder.

Q. What other service has he done?

A. By him doctrines have been held to the standard and usages to the Discipline, and the administration of law has been uniform. On the frontiers, as well as in the centers of civilization, through him the General Conference has touched the intermediate and primary judicatories, and transmitted executive energy to the remotest parts of the ecclesiastical body. The Presiding Eldership has been a mighty agency in the progress of Methodism.

CHAPTER XI.

CONNECTIONALISM.

Section I.

Unity of Doctrine, Discipline, and Action.

Question. By what word is the holding-together quality of Methodism expressed?

Answer. *Connectionalism.* One body is united and animated by one spirit. Often the Church is spoken of as The Connection.

Q. To this, what other expressions agree?

A. Our "Connectional institutions," and "Connectional organs," and "Connectional interests," are written and spoken of as meaning those that pertain to the whole, in distinction from what may be local or personal.

Q. Is this holding together and moving together peculiar to the Methodists?

A. If it is not peculiar to them, they set a peculiar value upon it. In it they have found strength. Oneness in mind and heart, in purpose and action, is according to the genius of Christianity.

Q. Is the force of Connectionalism offensive or defensive?

A. It is both. It closes the ranks against enemies, and concentrates power upon whatever opposes. As a policy, the Church militant has ever found it expedient.

Q. Is it conservative or aggressive?

A. It is both. On the one hand, it maintains sound doctrine from the eccentricities of private opinions, and uniformity in the midst of change; on the other, with its accumulated resources, it moves to the accomplishment of great ends.

Q. What is the basis of our Connectionalism?

A. It is the sentiment of Christian fellowship taking this practical shape of ecclesiastical polity.

Q. How did Bishop Asbury express it?

A. "Methodism is union, all over: Union in exchange of preachers, union in exchange of sentiments, union in exchange of interests: we must draw resources from the center to the circumference."

Q. What form of Church government is strikingly wanting in this quality?

A. The Congregational, where each separate congregation, with its pastor, claims to be independent of every other, and self-governed.

Q. But do not those Churches have councils, and associations, and conventions?

A. Yes; but they are made up loosely, on no exact principle of representation; and their conclusions and deliverances are only advisory.

Q. What follows?

A. Great diversity of doctrine and discipline.

Q. What said Alexander Campbell concerning the sect called "Christians," of which he was the founder?

A. That "every sort of doctrine has been proclaimed by almost all sorts of preachers."

Q. What is the rule of Methodism?

A. The trumpet does not give an uncertain sound in her pulpits. The heretical doctrines of a preacher may be as dangerous to his hearers as an immoral life, and he is disciplined alike for both.

Q. How can this be done?

A. Methodism has her authoritative tribunals of judgment, and also her well-established standards of doctrine drawn from the word of God as the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice. No one can be licensed to preach without subscribing to her cardinal doctrines; and whoever departs from them can have no more place in her ministry.

Q. Besides confusion and contradiction of doctrine under the opposite regimen, what are the evils in discipline?

A. Preachers and members expelled from one Society, or Church, for immorality may be, and often are, received into another of the "same faith and order," without any respect for the action previously had in their cases.

Q. How is it in Methodism?

A. All the separate congregations, or Societies, or local Churches, make up one Church; and all the preachers constitute one body of pastors. For convenience, they are distributed into Conferences, Districts, Circuits, and Societies—but all hold the same doctrine and are governed by the same laws; and care is taken that there be no schism or division in the body.

Q. What follows from this?

A. A preacher in one Annual Conference may be transferred to any other, as easily as from one circuit to another, if the wants of the Church require it; and he has the same legal standing in the one as in the other.

Q. How does this rule apply to members?

A. A member in good standing, on removal, is entitled to a formal certificate, and that evidence of membership must be received wherever he presents it.

Q. How is it in cases of censure and expulsion?

A. As in privileges, so in penalties. A preacher expelled from one Conference is expelled from all; a member expelled from one Society is expelled from all. Neither can regain membership elsewhere on other terms than are required at the place where the expulsion took place.

Q. If an ordained preacher, after being expelled from the ministry in the Tennessee Conference, should remove within the bounds of the Arkansas Conference, and the members of the latter were satisfied of his reformation, could they reïnstate him?

A. They could not. The Conference that tried and expelled him holds his forfeited credentials, and through it he must be reïnstated in the ministry, if at all.

Q. Is this ever done?

A. Sometimes, but always in accordance with the Connectional idea. The Arkansas Conference, in such a case, would make application to the Tennessee, giving assurance of reforma-

tion in the person and requesting that the credentials be restored. If the Tennessee Conference is satisfied, the request may be granted.

Q. What scriptural sentiment is inculcated by Connectionalism?

A. St. Paul, describing the unity of the body of Christ, says: "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

Section II.

Connectional Ties—Organic.

Q. Will you name some of the bonds, or ties, of Methodism?

A. They are of two sorts—organic and incidental. Among the first is the General Conference.

Q. What is its relation to the other Conferences?

A. The power to create Annual Conferences, and to increase or diminish their number, rests with it. Whatever may be the number of the Annual Conferences, they are all organized on the same plan, are all governed by the same laws, and all have the same rights, and powers, and privileges. These powers, and rights, and privileges, are not derived from themselves, but from the body which originated them.

Q. What of the District, and Quarterly, and Church Conferences?

A. These have their order of business prescribed by the General Conference, and their plan of organization. They are free to act within their sphere, under certain rules which are the same everywhere.

Q. Suppose a member or any number of members of an Annual Conference offer to pass resolutions or to take action in contravention of the General Conference?

A. It is the right of the Bishop presiding to decline putting the question on a motion, resolution, or report, when, in his judgment, such motion, resolution, or report does not relate to the proper business of a Conference; *provided*, that the President, on being required by the Conference to do so, shall have inserted in the journals his refusal to put the question on such motion, resolution, or report, with his reason for so refusing.

Q. What is the object of this *proviso?*

A. To furnish specific ground of appeal, and also of complaint against the Bishop, to the General Conference.

Q. How is it in the lower judicatories?

A. The presiding officer there has the like responsibility.*

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* The history of these enactments may throw light on them: Between 1832 and 1840, certain traveling preachers of New England endeavored to use the Annual and Quarterly Conferences to promote political and social reforms that were popular in that region. They claimed the right to pass resolutions condemning other Conferences, reflecting severely on the Bishops for their official rulings in them, and even censuring the General Confer-

Q. What is another Connectional bond?

ence. They were withstood in this course principally by Bishops Hedding and Waugh, who happened to be presiding. The claims set up were that it is the prerogative of an Annual or Quarterly Conference to decide what business they will do, and when they will do it; that they have a constitutional right to discuss, in their official capacity, all moral subjects, and that it is the duty of the President to put all motions and resolutions to vote, when called for, according to the rules of the body.

In resisting these claims, the Bishops were guided rather by the genius of our Connectional system than by specific statutes. But the General Conference of 1840 sustained their course and supplied the specific legislation. It was farther claimed by these revolutionists that all questions of law arising out of the business of Annual or Quarterly Conferences are to be, of right, settled by the decision of those bodies, either primarily by resolution, or finally by appeal from the decision of the President. The consequence of which would be one official body might be arrayed against another. What would be law in Georgia might not be in Carolina, and heresy in Virginia might be orthodoxy in Texas. These reformers, being foiled, adopted a singular strategy to get rid of the operation of Connectional law by getting rid of the Connectional executive: prolonging the session, they would wear him out, or on his leaving to attend other Conferences the official direction of the body must be left in their hands. They claimed that although it belongs to the Bishop to appoint the time of holding the Conference, he has no discretionary authority to adjourn them, whatever length of time they may continue their session.

The answer of the General Conference to this was: "That the President of an Annual or a Quarterly Conference has the right to adjourn the Conference over which he presides when, in his judgment, all the business prescribed by the Discipline to such Conference shall have been transacted; *provided*, that if an exception be taken by the Conference to his so adjourning it, the exception shall be entered upon the journals of such Conference."

A. The Joint Itinerant General Superintendency—equally related to the whole Church, and supported by the whole Church.

Q. Does the interchange of pastors have any bearing in this way?

A. It is, indirectly, a very considerable bond of union. Every pastor is interested in the spiritual and temporal welfare of his neighbor's charge—it may be *his* next appointment.

Q. What is the effect upon the people?

A. The interest is mutual. All the preachers are theirs.

Q. Is there not another influence, close akin to this?

A. The transfer of preachers from one Annual Conference to another: this is only itinerancy on a larger scale.

Q. Suppose a majority of an Annual Conference becomes heretical, or countenances immorality—by what power could the unity and purity of Methodism be constitutionally maintained?

A. An extreme case—but it could be met in either of two ways: The General Conference might dissolve the body by a direct act; or, the Bishops, acting under its authority, might transfer the corrupted majority, and scatter them among other Annual Conferences, where they could be governed; supplying their places with better men from other Conferences.

Q. Perhaps they would not go?

A. Their names and their membership would go where they could be dealt with as the law

directs. Such an occasion can hardly occur; but the Church would not be helpless in purging out the leaven of evil, even in so formidable a shape.

Q. Name another Connectional tie?

A. The titles of Church property. The grounds and buildings of cemeteries, schools, parsonages, and preaching-houses, are held by local trustees for the benefit of the members of the Church—"subject to the discipline, usage, and ministerial appointments of said Church, as from time to time authorized and declared by the General Conference."

Q. If the members of a congregation, or a majority of them, should get infected with strange doctrine—for instance, become Swedenborgians—and go off, could they take the property with them?

A. They could not. It would continue for the uses originally designed. The highest courts of the land have so interpreted our title-deeds; and this, though a material, is by no means an inconsiderable, ligament.

Q. But suppose, claiming still to be Methodists, they break off from the Connection, and refuse to receive the preacher who has been regularly appointed?

A. He, nevertheless, would have the right to minister in that house, to the exclusion of any who may have been called or elected contrary to the rule of the Church. This is a bulwark against false teachers, and such as are carried about by every wind of doctrine.

Section III.

Connectional Ties—Incidental.

Q. Wherein do organic bonds of union differ from the incidental?

A. The former are vital, being essential to the ecclesiastical system: the latter are convenient, and may be greatly useful.

Q. Will you name some of these?

A. The Missionary Board. Here is associated effort, to promote Christ's kingdom. By working together in this behalf, the feeling of love and mutual dependence is cultivated; Christians are drawn nearer to each other.

Q. How is it with other Churches?

A. The Baptists, and some others, may be said to have no other Connectional tie than working, in common, for Foreign and Domestic Missions. Its worth to them, in this respect alone, is incalculable.

Q. What other incidental tie?

A. The religious Press. A Publishing House for books, and tracts, and periodicals—conducted under authority of the whole Church—is a potent agent for enlightening and harmonizing the people. The arrangement, by its responsibility, secures a pure religious literature, and, by its economy, a wide dissemination of it.

Q. And what else?

A. Christian education. A uniform course of study, extending through four years, is prescribed for all preachers upon entering the itinerancy. It includes twenty text-books, with parallel reference to twenty-six others.

Q. Has any provision been made for general education on the Connectional basis?

A. In the Sunday-schools a uniform system of instruction is carefully provided for the thousands of the children of the Church. But a uniform system in schools and colleges has not yet been realized.*

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* An Educational Institute was organized, several years ago, looking in this direction. In 1840 the subject was brought before the General Conference very pointedly, in the following words of the Episcopal Address: "A well-digested system of collegiate education, under the direction and control of the General Conference, is, in our opinion, loudly called for by the present state of the Church, and by our widely extended and extending influence as a religious denomination."

After expressing doubts as to the expediency of "theological seminaries, in the common acceptation of the term," "for the exclusive purpose of preparing young men for the sacred office, as for a profession," the Address continues: "But, should this body differ from us with regard to the expediency of establishing institutions for theological education, separate from our literary establishments, and for the exclusive purpose of preparing the students for the work of the ministry, we cannot too strongly recommend to you the propriety and importance of having the whole subject under the direction and control of the General Conference. We are well persuaded that your wisdom and experience will lead you to apprehend the great impropriety of sectional institutions in the Church, for such a purpose. To intrust a matter of such vast moment to a self-organized association, or to an Annual Conference or connection of Annual Conferences, we apprehend would be a precedent of dangerous tendency, which might ultimately affect the Church in matters of vital importance."

Section IV.

General Reflections.

Q. What is the nature of Connectionalism?

A. In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.

Q. May not Connectionalism be oppressive?

A. Not so long as the association is voluntary and the present safeguards exist.

Q. Is there not too much power in it?

A. That depends on whether it be used for destruction or for edification. If work is to be done, power must be lodged somewhere. Checks and balances are good: but a system may be so nicely checked and balanced as to stand still.

Q. What is the great safeguard against the abuse of Connectional trusts?

A. The General Conference—elected and meeting every four years, composed of an equal number of ministers and laymen—where all parts and interests of the Church are represented, to which all questions may come, and before which executive and judicial actions must pass in review.

Q. What is the Christian ideal of Connectionalism?

A. That given by the apostle, of a Church holding Christ as the Head—"from which all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

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